

Analysis of Gender Roles Within Farmer's Economy in the "Jatun Mayu" Watershed Communities – Tiraque, Bolivia

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BACKGROUND

For a long time, it was the paradigm that Andean societies have a very strong male predominance; relegating the role of women to reproductive responsibility only.

OBJECTIVES

Describe the roles of men and women in household economy and social organization within the communities.

Describe male and female participation in agricultural marketing institutions.

Analyze the effects of access to communication mass media on market decisions and on market performance

METHODOLOGY

The methodologies used are Rapid Market Appraisal (RMA) and Case Studies (CS), to provide a better understanding of farmers' marketing dynamic and decision making processes.

Both methodologies rely on: baseline data analysis (SANREM Project), secondary data, semi-structured interviews, direct observation and an analysis of social networks.

For CS the following tools are being used: regenerative cycles, flow diagrams and crop budgets; for the RMA, we are collecting market data and interviewing key informants.

PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES

1. REPRODUCTIVE ROLE

- An average household has 8 members (five children per family). 12% of households are headed by women, who usually are more vulnerable to fall in situations of extreme poverty (resources access).
- 46% of women are literate (only 4% finished high school), but 76% of the illiterate population are women
- The main productive activity developed by farmer's families is agriculture; undertaking women mainly the household work, animals care and agricultural production support.
- The decisions about the income management and household are taken by men and women together (60%), but regarding the administration per se, women are who bear most of the responsibilities (43%).

- Mainly women are the main responsible for children's education, feeding and health care.



Average family of 8 members: Father (right), Mother (middle) and six children (2 boys and 4 girls).



Women are responsible for household management, child care, food security, health and education.



Due to migration, often women assume male's activities, like plot preparation and irrigation.



5 y.o. boy working in agriculture side by side with his father. "Everybody works in the family" say farmers.



17 y.o. girl generating income as bread baker in market.



Both go to the market, women are in charge, but men support them.

2. PRODUCTIVE ROLE

Agricultural Production: It's the main source of income. Families own from 0.5 to 20 ha; but in the case of households led by women, it varies



In market there is a high female attendance and predominance (View of Tiraque market)



"The wholesaler never loses". This sentence used by farmer, summed the transaction relationship

from 0.25 to 1.2 ha. Women only manage 5% of the cultivated lands. Men take most of the decisions in productive activities, but always counting on the support and opinion of women. In recent years as an effect of migration, women are engaged in production activities that were exclusive to men; hiring a woman is cheaper than a man.

Marketing: Sales decisions are made by men and women together, but women are mostly responsible for marketing, because of their negotiation skills and bargaining power (higher prices) with wholesalers (mostly women). Men play the role of transportation, support and security of their wives. **The high participation of women in markets is striking.**

Access to Information: Most farmers have access to information about prices, volumes and possible markets, through radio programmes, social networks and especially the use of cell phones (growth strongly in the last years).

3. COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT ROLES:

The Union (Syndicate): It's the main social and political institution in the community, but it's only **led by men**. Women have no right to vote, but only to report its decisions to their homes.

Women's organization: Are sponsored and promoted by institutions that work in the area. Their activities are related to issues of internal training on vegetable production, small animals, food security (child nutrition), health, etc.



View of a "Union" meeting with some female attendance but only as viewers.

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