



OUT OF THE THEORY & INTO THE FIELD

*Strengthening women's economic empowerment through agricultural extension:
What it could look like*

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The Background: Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

Bridging the Gap



Oakley and Garforth 1985

What:

The application of scientific research and knowledge to agricultural practices through farmer education

Why:

To improve farmers' productivity, food security and livelihoods

How:

- Technology transfer
- Advisory services
- Facilitation

Through:

Public, Non-profit, or For-profit systems

The Challenge: Engendering the “Best Fit”

Moving away from simply identifying “best practice” or one-size-fits-all approach toward a more customized “best fit” application of contextualize service principles

Extension takes place in complex environments structured a priori by gender relations....Conceptualizing extension as a technical value-free activity is seriously mistaken (Farnworth 2010)

Key questions

Who is “the farmer”?

How to reach them?

What system can make it happen?

Who are the most effective agents?

Key considerations

Both men & women; Land owner or farm manager?

Mixed or single sex farmer groups; Accounting for time & mobility; education & literacy; initial resource endowments

Public, non-profit, for profit; Adoption of competency frameworks

Women &/or men; ability to apply gender-equitable approaches

Understanding Women's Economic Empowerment

Empowerment (Kabeer 1999)

- **Agency** - The capacity to define one's own goals and make strategic choices in pursuit of these goals
- **Achievements** - The ability to achieve one's goals
- **Resources** – both tangible and intangible assets, including information & services

within an

Enabling environment – institutions that facilitate the people's ability to achieve their choices

Women's economic empowerment (Quisumbing et al. 2016)

Women have the skills, resources, and opportunities needed to access and compete equitably in markets, and the agency to control and benefit from economic gains

- **objective dimensions** -- measured by e.g., increased productivity and income, usually objectively measured
- **subjective dimensions** -- measured by e.g., increased agency and well-being, usually based on self-reporting

Do we know...

- **What are pathways to women's economic empowerment in agriculture?**
- **Does agri-entrepreneurship lead to women's economic empowerment for everyone?**
- **How can agricultural extension and advisory support services effectively support women producers and agri-entrepreneurs?**

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What works to support women's economic empowerment in agriculture?

Producers



Entrepreneurs



Wage workers



- Improving access to resources (e.g., land, inputs, credit, and information)
- Membership in groups
- Equitable household relationships, including joint decision-making

“The indicator that is seen most often is the percentage of participation of women and youth, which while important, does not by itself show the empowerment, economic participation and social development of these groups” (DLEC Honduras 2017: 41)



Reach

Benefit

Empower

Objective

To include women as well as men in program activities; to increase the kind and quality of their participation

Objective

To increase women’s well-being (e.g., food security, income, health)

Objective

To strengthen women’s ability to make strategic life choices and put those choices into action

Source: Johnson, N. L. et al. 2017

Develop Gender-Transformative, Market-Inclusive AES across the Value Chain

Reach

Benefit

Empower

Tactics for AES

Recognize women as farmers, processors, and traders, enabling quality participation in farmer fields school, lead farmer programs, agricultural associations

Tactics for AES

Intentionally design programming to strengthen women's benefits from market integration by analyzing and reducing gender-based constraints in access to productive resources and services

Tactics for AES

“Bundle” services that strengthen access to women's assets with business development training and behavior change communication activities to shift household dynamics between men and women

AES Practices supporting Women's Economic Empowerment

Reach

Benefit

Empower

Research & Advisory Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct research on locally appropriate crops incl. new options with market/nutrition potential (e.g., mung beans) • Collect trait preference data from women farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop labor saving technologies • Conduct research on new options with market and nutrition (OSP, HIB) • Facilitate links to service providers, e.g., input suppliers, buyers, transporters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct research on the impact of AES to reduce gender disparities in ag • Conduct research on best avenues for EAS
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate women's attendance • Schedule at convenient times and locations • Convene mixed groups or women-only groups, based on context and purpose • Use "social mobilizers" to disseminate AES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing groups (incl. cooperatives and associations) to encourage women to take leadership positions • Use ICT to reduce women's time & facilitate knowledge retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated interventions the provide services and trainings, e.g., credit access with financial education – CARE Pathways • "Farming as a family business" programs (ACDI/VOCA)

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