

## **Towards Enhancing Leadership Capacity of Women in Agriculture**

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### **Abstract**

Increasingly complex societal problems require the collective efforts of all genders to solve. However, women seldom receive the social support necessary to develop leadership identity and capacity despite inherent leadership potential (Ely et al., 2011; Shollen, 2015). Leadership is instrumental in promoting community efforts (Igalla et al., 2020). Hence, women's leadership capacity should be developed to encourage collective efforts to solve problems, especially in a sector where they are the majority of workers, such as agriculture. The agricultural sector is faced with diverse problems affecting the sector's productivity. Women are needed to facilitate collective efforts toward solving agricultural problems. Hence, there is a need to increase efforts targeted at women's leadership capacity development. This roundtable discussion will ask participants to share their views on the importance of developing women's leadership capacity, the current state of women's leadership capacity development, challenges to women's leadership capacity development, and diverse methods for developing capacity through leadership education. Emerging scholars with research interests in women's leadership development will facilitate the round table discussion. The overall goal of the discussion is to consider the methods through which women's leadership capacity can be enhanced.

### **Session Learning/Participant Objectives**

This roundtable discussion aims to facilitate conversations about the current state and challenges of women's leadership capacity development in the agricultural sector. In addition, the roundtable discussion will seek to provide insights and recommendations into various means through which women's leadership capacity can be enhanced. While this targets the agricultural sector, knowledge of women's leadership capacity building from the perspective of leadership education is transferable to other sectors.

The objectives of the roundtable are to:

1. Allow facilitators and participants to share their views on the importance of women's leadership development.
2. Discuss the challenges of women's leadership development and the effort leadership educators can make to solve this problem.
3. Provide insights into diverse opportunities for women to develop their leadership capacity and the likely effects on agriculture.

### **Session Description**

Priority 5 of the National Leadership Educator Research Agenda analyzes the importance of leadership education and upcoming research in the field for addressing and solving complicated situations (Andenoro & Skendall, 2020). The agricultural sector is currently faced with diverse problems that have limited the sector's ability to feed the increasing world population (Aday & Aday, 2020). Food insecurity, malnutrition, and poverty emanating from the sector's problems (Siddiqui et al., 2020) call for prompt solutions that can only be achieved through collective actions (Pu & Zhong, 2020). Consequently, agricultural leadership is critical in ensuring solutions to agriculture problems, since leadership can be viewed as a process whereby an individual can motivate other groups to achieve a common goal (Naile & Selesho, 2014).

Evidence from around the globe and in individual countries demonstrates rural women's crucial roles in ensuring their households' food and financial security (Gobezie, 2010). However, women seldom receive the social support necessary to claim a leadership identity when aspiring for a leadership role (Ely et al., 2011; Shollen, 2015). Therefore, it becomes imperative to increase the leadership development capacity of women to maximize their abilities to assume active roles in farming activities and solve agricultural problems. The proposed interactive roundtable will invite participants to share their views on the need and ways to develop women's leadership capacity. This roundtable discussion will begin with the facilitators introducing leadership capacity development followed by the discussion questions.

#### **Primary Question:**

1. In what ways can the leadership capacity of women in agriculture be enhanced? How can leadership educators contribute to the development of women's agricultural leadership capacity?

#### **Additional Questions:**

1. How would you describe the current state of women's leadership capacity development opportunities in societies?
2. What challenges, if at all, have you encountered while conducting or participating in a women's leadership development program or training? How were you able to navigate through the challenges?
3. What has contributed most to your leadership capacity development? Or, what methods have you adopted that have contributed to the leadership capacity development of women within your reach?
4. What policies, structures, and programs should be put in place to improve the opportunities for women to develop their leadership skills and assume more roles in agriculture?

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