ECHO
Technical Note # 89

Women and Agriculture

What's Inside:

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Figure 1. Thai hill tribe woman weeding her field. *Source: Tim Motis*

A version of this material first appeared in EDN 134. Gender dynamics in relation to agriculture is a big topic, and one we had not previously written about in EDN. In recent years, widespread attention has been paid to the disparity that often exists between men and women when it comes to agriculture and access to related resources. I talked to several members of ECHO's network (who are also former interns and staff members) to get their input, based on their experiences in a wide range of cultures and communities. This TN also incorporates feedback from other members of our network. Let us know if you have thoughts to share after reading it!

INTRODUCTION

Success on a small farm depends on the family members who run it and live on what it produces. In serving smallholders, it helps to know who does what on the farm. Who makes decisions about what and where to plant? At harvest time, how is the income used, and who decides this? When you plan, implement and evaluate your agricultural programs, do both men and women participate equally in the meetings, trainings and projects that are undertaken?

Globally, women are very involved in agriculture; according to some estimates, they do more than half the work involved in farming. However, they do not receive a proportional amount of extension and other help; nor do they receive benefits proportional to their labor. According to FAO's 2011 State of Food and Agriculture, "If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20 to 30%. This could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5 to 4%, which could in turn reduce the number of hungry people in the world by [raising] up to 150 million people out of hunger."

Agricultural involvement encompasses activities all the way from seed saving to the marketing of agricultural products. This article gives ideas for methods to learn about gender dynamics in a community, examines some of the reasons women may face constraints related to agriculture, and shares some potentially helpful ways to address the challenges. This article only scratches the surface, so at the end we share other resources that can be used to dig deeper into the subject. We would welcome feedback and insights on this topic from you, our network members!

LEARNING ABOUT GENDER DYNAMICS

Strategies for understanding gender roles (Laura Meitzner Yoder)

Before trying to implement change in a community, observe the gender dynamics. When I talked to Laura Meitzner Yoder, she shared some excellent ideas for doing so. First, carefully observe people's interactions in the community. Laura said, "Every day try to learn something about how women and men relate. Write it down at the end of the day. At every single meeting, count men and women. In meetings, draw a picture of where they are. Are the women outside the tent and men inside the tent? Who gets chairs or sits in the front? Keep track of who speaks. When women speak, how do people respond?"

Second, actively seek to learn about men's and women's roles in the agricultural cycle. For example, ask a local artist to make simple cards, one with a picture of a woman and the other with a picture of a man. Ensure that their features and clothing look like

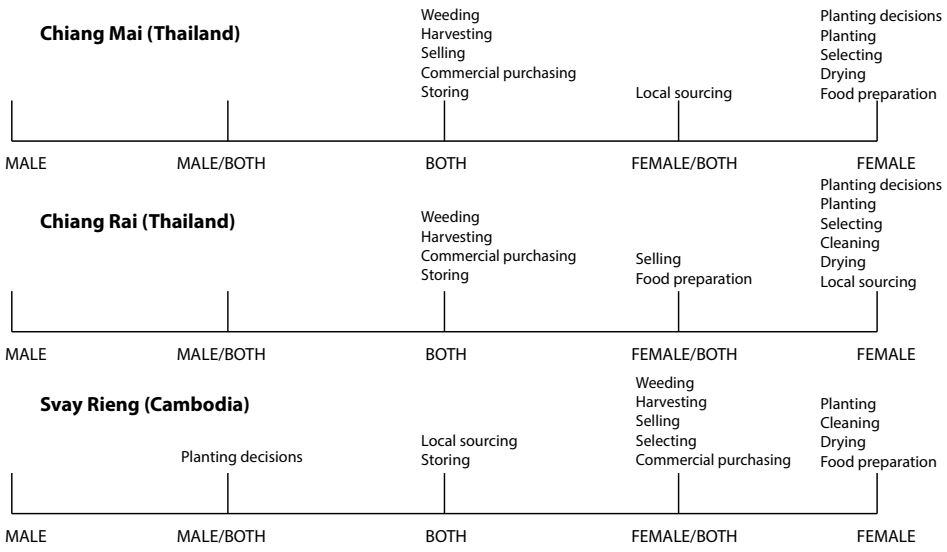

Figure 2. Gender roles in the informal seed system as identified by focus group participants in communities in Chiang Mai (Thailand) [top], Chiang Rai (Thailand) [middle], and Svay Rieng (Cambodia) [bottom]. From Gill *et al.* 2013.

those of men and women farmers in the area where you work. Give a set of cards to each person in the group. Ask people about who does various farming tasks, and ask them to hold up the card for the person or people who do that task. (It might work best to ask men and women separately). The results may surprise you! As an example of what you might learn, Figure 2 shows gender roles for activities related to seed saving, as identified by participants using this technique in three different communities in Thailand and Cambodia. The local extension officers who worked with these communities found the exercise helpful, both because they didn't know who was responsible for certain parts of the agricultural cycle, and because it taught them that they had over-predicted male participation.

Laura cautioned, “There are few absolutes from place to place. It would be tempting to say that men do the heavy work of cutting things down, but in many communities it is as likely to be a woman, or a man and a woman working together. In Southeast Asia, men and women would often work together, but the tasks would be separate. "Be sure to ask about not just fieldwork, but decisions. Who decides what crops will be planted? Who purchases/acquires the seeds? In terms of seed saving, a lot of that work centers around the kitchen, and from our research a lot of that work was often done by women. But in some homes, women did none of the cooking! Be aware and skeptical of your own assumptions. Do not generalize too quickly.”

Laura added, “In Thailand and Papua, men and women often worked in the fields together and there didn’t seem to be strict gender separation. In other places that is different. Roles vary widely from place to place, but also within a society. Just as there is variation in your home culture, you are likely to find exceptions in other places. For people who are working cross-culturally, do not take your own categories with you. It can take quite a bit of ‘unlearning’ to see what is actually there, rather than assuming that it is a certain way.”

Third, have people tell a story of an incident; it could be something they do in the community, or a story of a conflict. Laura suggested, “Listen for the gender comments and the assumptions. Is the elder male or female? Do women work out conflict, then share it with the men, who formalize the peacemaking?”

This process of learning about gender dynamics is called *gender analysis*. Susan Stewart described the process in chapter 9 of her book *Learning Together: The Agricultural Worker’s Participatory Sourcebook*. A person’s sex (whether they are physically male or female) is biologically defined. By contrast, “gender refers to the roles or characteristics society has given people, such as who washes the clothes and who drives the car in a family, or who is supposed to be meek and who is supposed to be strong. This is changeable and not universal. It is socially or culturally defined.” Gender analysis is a process of working together to reflect on the gender roles that exist in a culture or society.

Stewart pointed out that gender analysis is important for many reasons: so that husbands and wives learn to appreciate each other's work; women begin to value their own work; community members are more effective; training is given to appropriate people; and the work burden can be appropriately shared between men and women in households.

When it comes to specific projects, long-term success becomes more likely when gender analysis is undertaken early on. Before launching a project, planners should ask questions about women’s and men’s roles and responsibilities, and about ownership and control of resources.

In the process of gender analysis, questions are asked about women’s and men’s roles (in the family, on the farm and in society); about their access to resources; and about their control over resources (e.g. money, land and animals).

One way to approach gender analysis is to place men and women in separate groups, and ask them to describe the work they do. Also in groups of all-men and all-women, have people describe what a woman’s life is like at different stages. Finally, have women map the

> Become aware of assumptions (your own and others), spoken or unspoken, that keep men or women from participating, or that cause us to design non-inclusive programs, such as:
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> “Farming is a man’s job.”
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> “Only women should handle purchases of farm inputs.”
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> “It’s a husband’s job to make decisions for the family.”
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> “Women’s work doesn’t matter.”
>
> “It is best if men market the produce in public places.”
>
> “Only women cook and clean.”

village, then have men map the same area. Share the responses in a big group, with the help of a facilitator. If men's and women's perceptions are different, it will become clear. The mapping exercise will help illustrate what women and men each find important in their community.

Using drawings or pictures of a person doing agricultural activities, have workshop participants indicate who usually does them on a farm: men or women? (To avoid introducing bias, for each activity, either make two sets of drawings--one a woman and the other a man--or use all pictures of a woman). Do the same with drawings of resources. Who uses them, and who owns them? The "Further Resources" section at the end of this article includes helpful tools that can help with gender analysis.

Figure 3. Husband and wife Tanzanian farmers grading vanilla and showing their harvest. *Source: Stacy Reader*

Importance of cultural sensitivity

Note that in some cultures, you may need to take very small, culturally-appropriate steps. When working in Tanzania with a male-dominated community, Stacy Reader learned that extreme caution was necessary when having conversations about gender dynamics. Stacy commented, "Multi-gendered groups were not allowed, or the men would potentially punish outspoken women. Sometimes even if it was heard that women met together to talk about gender relations, men would punish the women who attended. So [my mentor] would often call women together for school meetings and talk about the kids' education, and then add on bits of gender dynamics and give the women space to talk." Much harm can be done if societal standards are not respected at the outset. In some cultures, woman-to-woman mentorships may be the best way for women to build each other up and encourage one another. Joel Matthews, professor of Engineering Technology at Diablo Valley College, shared some comments after reading the original article about women's agricultural participation in *EDN 134*.

> "I highlight what Laura Meitzner Yoder said regarding no absolutes in terms of gendered behavior. This truth is reinforced by the contrast between Laura's experiences of men and women working together in Asia, and Stacy Reader's experiences of separation between men and women [in one context] in Tanzania.
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> "As a cultural anthropologist I must remind people that, if we subscribe to the concept of cultural relativity (no single culture has the objective ability to interpret and critique the values of other societies.), then we must acknowledge that this concept cuts both ways. In other words, even our supposedly superior egalitarian ideals must not be considered absolutes. This means that we should always be careful of imposing our ideals, however well-intentioned, on others. This imposition occurs when we organize 'village meetings' where we insist that men and women join forces. Clearly, as Reader noted, such meetings are considered inappropriate [in one context] in Tanzania.
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> "I have observed many well-intentioned development facilitators imposing mixed meetings in contexts where such mixing is inappropriate, but this 'steamrolling' over community values is allowed, or even encouraged, when we believe that our values are superior to theirs. It is easy to imagine that if the Tanzanians would follow our lead, they could achieve the type of egalitarian society that we envision for them. This is a difficult area to sort out, especially when women are oppressed, which they often are. However, my experience in West Africa has shown me that forcing men and women to attend meetings together may ultimately harm the very women we hope to assist. This is particularly true in regions of West Africa where men and women operate in separate, parallel organizations.
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> "In Niger, where I did much of my research, successful men and women conduct social relations and business operations in the context of small voluntary associations. Among the Hausa women of Niger, these are often much more successful than men's associations. One of the dangers of forcing mixed development planning meetings in this context is that men can easily take control of what had previously been highly successful women's enterprises.
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> "Thus, I suggest that in some contexts, men and women may function in separate societies, not because women have been denied joint control over resources with men, but rather because women do not want to risk losing control of the resources that they already manage. One of the most important pre-cursors to sustainable and equitable development is to understand what already exists, and why things are the way they are. Once this is understood, it may be discovered that, rather than being haphazard, customs are based on informed decisions."

Joel addressed these very issues in an article published by Taylor and Francis.

CONSTRAINTS WOMEN MAY FACE

What if your observations, along with community responses to your questions, show that women are underrepresented and that their skills are underutilized? To understand why this might be the case, it helps to understand some of the factors that can be especially challenging for women when it comes to farming. These may include:

Figure 4. Tanzanian farmers harvesting beans together. *Source: Stacy Reader*

Misperceptions. In many places, people associate the term "farmer" with men. This misperception is perpetuated by brochures and advertisements with pictures that only depict farmers as men. The notion can become further embedded in people's minds when all the extension agents in an area are men.

Also, people may not think of home gardens or food production for the household (often done by women) as "farming," because of the lack of a cash or commercial component.

Sometimes a woman's own self-perceptions need to change before she can take a more active role. If a woman has spent her whole life being told that she is not capable, or if she has not been given opportunities to make decisions, she may be hesitant to begin doing so. The traditional roles of a husband and wife may be such that a woman is unused to making certain types of decisions.

Little access to land. Women often have fewer land rights, and less security of tenure. Sometimes women farm on open, unused land, but may not be recognized as farmers because they don't own land.

Inaccessible training. Meetings and training related to farming may be at scheduled times and places that make it difficult for women to attend. Any time spent in a meeting may mean something else does not get done, such as food processing or meal preparation. Lack of provision for child care can also make trainings inaccessible.

Discrimination. Explicit gender discrimination occurs within some communities.

Lack of literacy and numeracy. Women may have had fewer opportunities to learn to read or to work with numbers, making it difficult for them to access information about farming. Brochures and advertisements that rely on the written word may be inaccessible for many women.

Invisibility of women's work. In *Learning Together*, Susan Stewart described the invisibility of women's work: "…village men and women tend not to value the work of women. As a reflection of this problem, sometimes development programs do not consider the roles of both men and women in agriculture in their planning." Though perhaps not directly involved in economic agricultural activity, women's extensive activities in and around the home mean that they "…[play] a vital role in the production of crops, even though they [are] not always in the fields." Overlooking and/or disregarding "women's roles only hurts the community as they lose half of the available resources the community has for the wise solution of its problems. It is like a bicycle with two tires. No one notices that both are important until one of the tires has a flat."

Rise of commercial agriculture. Ratakarn Arttawuttikun (Wah), seed bank manager at ECHO's Regional Impact Center in Southeast Asia, has observed negative impacts of commercial agriculture on the quality of women's participation in agriculture. She commented, "The rise of commercial agriculture has increased the involvement of men in agriculture, especially in regards to their authority in farm decision-making roles. Men regularly decide which farm inputs should be purchased such as fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides as well as equipment such as rice combines.

"Commercial agriculture has diminished the role of women who previously worked alongside men with equal roles and respect. Traditionally, women's work in the fields was equal to that of men regardless of task (e.g., planting, harvest)." Now, said Wah, women working in agriculture tend to do more menial jobs and earn lower income. "In communities, there are some women in agriculture, but with the presence of commercial agriculture, they are working in these commercial farms to perform tasks such as weeding and planting rice. They are hired out as agricultural workers because they do not have their own land or rights [this is for a largely migrant community]. As a result, their income is lower than that of men in the same position. The number of women involved in integrated farming/gardening decreased because of improved transportation and access to market. Women shifted from being largely producers to consumers of their foodstuffs."

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

Once you have an idea of how gender dynamics work in your community, and some understanding of why men and women interact as they do, you can begin to deliberately encourage involvement by both women and men. Following are suggestions to encourage greater participation by women.

Be attentive to your own modelling. How does your own household demonstrate equal value of women and men? Do you share burdensome tasks? Do not underestimate the influence of this! Others may be closely observing your home life, to see possible ways for both women and men to take on unconventional roles.

Look for entry points. Look for examples in the local culture where women already play a strong role, or where change is happening and women are being included. Rick Burnette shared that in parts of Asia, women often manage the family finances. This could be significant when promoting micro-enterprise, micro-finance and marketing. Start with what is working.

Encourage even small changes. Wah commented, “In the common occurrences of everyday life, encourage women farmers to plant their own vegetables, to improve the soil through using bokashi from leftovers, or to eat sweet, fresh fruit after harvesting their rice field. These are small but meaningful changes.”

Change women’s self-perceptions by working with them strategically. Stacy Reader worked in Tanzania with a group of mostly pastoralist women who lacked confidence in themselves but were concerned about their children's nutrition. She said, “I talked with them about how better health for them and their kids would help them not be so tired (many women have brucellosis where I was), and so they would start on small medicinal/nutritional gardens around their houses. From there they wanted protein from chicken eggs for their children, so they started raising chickens. It just kept expanding (from the house out) from there, organically and naturally. In that situation, using what women were already passionate about to encourage or show them their worth was the key for success in getting their voices heard for their and their children's health.”

Enable women to participate in meetings. To increase participation by women, Laura Meitzner Yoder suggested that you first invite women, then ask them specifically when and where they would like to meet. She commented, “One of the classic errors is to hold meetings when it is impossible for women to attend. In some regions, if you were to hold a meeting for women in the mornings, they would not come, because they have to attend to the day’s household duties early.

“If you are interested in women’s participation, do not assume that they can come on your Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 schedule, or that they are going to travel to get there. Ask very openly, ‘Where and when would you like the meeting to take place?’ Women may not be able to travel to an office or training center, but may be eager to attend events held in their own village. In small villages, they may say, ‘At night [when the children are fed and they are not busy preparing food for the day], in someone’s kitchen.’ Changing the timing, location, and format of meetings requires flexibility from extension workers, but could make all the difference in making it possible for women to participate.”

Then again, depending where you live, evening meetings might not be ideal. Angela Boss commented, “In some cultures, women cannot leave their homes after dark or are not able to leave their home without a male escort. Participatory planning of training activities is ideal for ensuring equal involvement of men and women.”

Sometimes men come to agriculture extension meetings, while women do more of the farming tasks. The reasons for this might vary. Laura Meitzner Yoder commented, “If your extension workers are mostly male, they may have an easier time talking to other men. Also, being invited to a government meeting is something that is a high-status event; you are likely going to be fed, and maybe paid. If you are in a society where men get the higher-status things handed to them, they may be the ones invited.”

“I’ve tried to include women, but they won’t come to meetings!”

- Ask women why they do not come to meetings.
- Ask women when and where they would prefer to meet.

Be careful to consider women’s daily commitments when planning a training session. It may be impossible for a woman to come for an extended period of time. Rhoda Beutler pointed out that in communities where women depend on daily income from selling in a local market, they will not be able to spend consecutive whole days in training. “Consider people’s economic activity when planning,” she cautioned. Brian Flanagan agrees. He commented, “My experience in rural Haiti was that market days never worked well for meetings. Both men and women were often busy, but especially the women.”

Even when both women and men are present at a meeting, participation by both is not assured. Laura suggested, “Build into your meetings ways for women’s voices to be included and heard. In some places, all that requires is a ‘talking stick’; you can only talk when holding the talking stick, and if you are male you have to hand it to a female, who then hands it to a male. Each person needs to speak before it is returned.”

When leading a meeting, be aware that subtle behaviors can unknowingly work against gender equality. Jan Disselkoen, now retired from World Renew, shared about a memorable experience she had in Niger: “Men and women always sat separately--that was almost impossible to change. But I noticed that when the male facilitators spoke to the group, they never even looked towards the women's section. Eye contact was made entirely with the men--and they wondered why the women never responded to their questions! They were a bit defensive when I pointed out my observation, but they altered their behavior with the result that the women did begin to participate more.”

Encourage literacy, using locally available resources. Jan Disselkoen shared some thoughts with me about literacy, based on her thirty years of experience.

> “If there's a common thread in how World Renew approaches literacy these days, it's using and linking people to the materials and programs that the government and other groups have developed in their country. In the early days, especially in countries where no such materials or programs existed, we created our own materials.”
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> “Creating your literacy materials from scratch is time consuming and expensive. Literacy training is also intensive and time consuming for participants. They have to come to a class at least four times a week for at least six to eight months before they actually learn to read fairly proficiently—and it takes another six to eight months before the reading level is high enough for folks to maintain without classes. This takes a lot of commitment, both by the volunteers and by the participants. However, this

intensity has a wonderful spin off. In every literacy program for women that I've observed, the social impacts of getting together and talking with other women in the community about something other than the everyday stuff are huge. And even if the women don't have that many places to actually use their literacy, the growth of self-esteem from learning to read is significant.

"Another thing we commonly do to promote literacy is to create box libraries so that reading materials are available in communities and people can maintain their literacy levels. Literacy classes and materials are, of course, ways to promote other things like agriculture and health. But I found that what really motivated people to learn to read and write in their own language was either religious (e.g. wanting to be able to read the Bible) or cultural (marginalized ethnic groups such as the Tuareg in Niger had a very strong desire to maintain their language and had even created their own alphabet). In Sierra Leone, our most popular books were chiefdom histories, stories and songs, and books of local proverbs."

When several women in a community are able to read, they can learn and share information with other women. Stacy Reader commented, "I found an ANAMED medicinal book in Swahili for the women I worked with; the few that could read would read it to the others and they all got to learn together, so I wasn't always the one sharing the information."

Non-text resources for extension. Literacy is important, but when incorporating text in extension materials, use simple terms that are easy to read. Agricultural extension can also make use of photos, drawings, and other media to communicate technical material in ways that non-literate people can understand.

Radio broadcasts are a good non-text option for extension. Farm Radio International has Resource Packs (104 of them!) on a wide range of topics, all geared toward smallholder farmers. Radio scripts can be adapted to local conditions.

Digital instruction can be helpful where available (but be aware that women also often lack access to technology, compared to men). Several organizations that share video information online are listed at the end of this article in the "Further Resources" section.

Involve women as extensionists and lead farmers. Despite women's integral involvement in farming activities, you may find that most extension agents in your area are men. While working in Haiti, Rhoda Beutler told me, "We organized a conference in Haiti, and at least twice we requested in the invitation letter that each organization send a man and a woman. Each time, the actual percentage of women who came was between 10% and 25%. One organization called and said, 'We actually don't have any women on our agriculture team,' so they sent two men. Others just sent two men without contacting us about it."

"I've tried to hire women agricultural agents, but they never apply for the jobs."

- Ask women you know what hinders them from applying, and what would make such a job feasible.
- Ask members of agencies who have women agricultural workers on staff what they do to recruit, develop and encourage their women staff members.
- Consider helping to set up child care, so that women are able to accept and do the job.

Angela Boss's organization, World Renew, looks for and works with "lead farmers." She pointed out that if you want female lead farmers, you must also prioritize women as extension agents. But be sensitive when hiring female staff and volunteers! Be willing to invest in new ways to make the position feasible. Angela described an organization in Niger that budgeted extra money to enable women to have chaperones, especially when required to travel overnight. In southern Africa, MCC provided a nanny for a woman hired to promote Conservation Agriculture, so that she could bring her baby along on extension trips.

Figure 5. Namesri Jaka heading to do ag extension/training work with women. *Source: Rick Burnette*

Angela suggested, in the case of a lead farmer agreement (whether for a man or woman), that the hiring organization require the paperwork to be signed by the spouse and returned after one week. This would help promote family communication and consideration.

When considering women for leadership positions, be careful not to overschedule. One unintended consequence of trying to engage women in committees can be a labor overload. How many meetings are truly necessary?

It is not always the case that women are underrepresented in positions of leadership. Rhoda Beutler received comments from someone working in the area of agricultural development that some of his best community leaders/animators were women, and that where he worked in Haiti, women were accepted as leaders and their voices were heard. ECHO staff member Brian Flanagan, who worked in Haiti for many years, has seen the same dynamic at work.

Help women get access to land. Advocate with community leaders regarding land access for women. Laura Meitzner Yoder's article "Resource Rights" from *EDN 106* underscores the importance of land rights when it comes to agriculture.

Provide options for child care. Child care can be critically important for encouraging and enabling women's involvement in agriculture. Laura Meitzner Yoder shared a case study from a group of women near Hyderabad, India. The women went through a very long process to become food self-sufficient. They had owned no land, and were desperately poor. Finally they requested and received land from landowners who did not want to pay tax on it--but the land had no topsoil and nothing would grow on it. The women spent twelve years improving the land; they carried silt from the river and built rock bunds. Then, when they finally could plant, they had to locate seeds from older women in the community.

The women planted crops appropriate for their dryland climate--ones that could grow in poor soil and without irrigation. The community is now food sufficient, and most of the women now own some land.

Figure 6. A woman riding her bike to market, to sell a crop that her husband would have sold before. *Source: Fairuza Mutesi*

Laura shared, "I told them, 'This is an amazing story. You had to make the soil. You had to get the seeds. What one thing made this agricultural transformation, this food sovereignty, possible?' Their answer was, 'Preschool.' They decided to do a childcare co-op, taking turns looking after young children. Little babies would be with them, on their back. But the children who were preschool-age needed their attention at home and couldn't be in the fields because they would roam too far. So they came together and decided to make their own kindergarten. Childcare is demanding! They said, 'When we knew that our children were well-cared for and happy, then we could do this work.'"

Concerns about child care also exist for women who work as extension agents. An organization may understandably be hesitant to assign a woman to travel if she has young children at home (though Rhoda Beutler pointed out that this can also go the other way, if a man is the primary caregiver in a family).

Request feedback from women. Look for ways to involve women in all parts of the agriculture continuum. For example, women's input is important when it comes to research questions. People tend to have strong preferences when it comes to food. When developing a new crop, higher yield is not necessarily enough, if the taste or even color are perceived to be inferior. Often women are the family members who shop for and cook food, so their input on desired characteristics is extremely important. For example, Angela Boss shared, "When we introduced new bean varieties into the Central African Republic, one of the key considerations beyond yield and marketability was cooking time. Women do much of the foraging for firewood, so bean varieties that cook relatively quickly was an important factor for women. Faster cooking meant less firewood was consumed."

Jan Disselkoen agrees on the importance of women's input when deciding on crop varieties. In Niger, she encountered an assumption that if men traditionally grew the crop, they should decide what varieties to grow. She said, "Villages were testing 3-month maize varieties in order to make a choice about which ones to multiply for seed to plant on their farms. The field worker did an exercise with the men's group to decide which variety to multiply. When he got back to the office, my colleague asked him what variety the women preferred. He went back to the villages and did the same exercise with the women. It turned out that the variety the men had chosen required significant extra time to pound. The men's first and second choice were quite close together, and their second choice matched the women's first choice, so it was obvious to them that they should make the change."

The Global Rice Science Partnership (GRiSP) has a gender strategy to empower women. According to an article in Spore magazine, "The term 'empowerment' includes the enhanced role of women in the design, experimentation and evaluation of agricultural research for development, as well as improved access to resources (inputs, knowledge, and improved technologies) and control over output (harvested rice and processed products)." The article included this statement: "All scientists are aware that technologies are not neutral and men and women may adopt or reject the technology developed." For this reason, scientists are working with women to identify specific needs.

Emphasize smaller-scale, integrated farming practices. In Thailand, Wah encourages continued movement towards household-level production that strengthens the role of women in agriculture. "Organic farming and integrated farming practices, which are gaining in certain regions, especially through backyard gardening, allow women to acquire greater roles that commercial farming has displaced.

"Backyard agriculture creates opportunity for income generation as well as increased household savings. Although there are a growing number of backyard and integrated gardens, they are not yet at the level that traditional farming was before the rise of commercial farming."

Wah suggested first aiming for food sufficiency. "Self-sufficiency [in terms of food production] helps women lower expenses. It is desirable to eat what you produce yourself. If a woman has extra, she can sell it or share with the community."

Leverage women's strengths by building relationships. Wah commented, "Building relationships and participation in the community is a very important variable for change. If a community has a foundation of togetherness, it will experience results faster than other

Figure 7. A family working together on their groundnut plot. *Source: Edward Nkwirize*

communities will." She added that women tend to more easily build relationships than men, due to shared activity. "Relationships can be built between women through taking meals together, working alongside one another, participating in weavers groups and through other activities together."

Wah also suggested, "Encourage women to use the resources in the community that can benefit everyone, including the growing of medicinal, often indigenous herbs, which would then not have to be sourced outside of the community. Just experiment to gain experience—encourage women to do their own research and invite [them] to share and extend what they learn to the community."

Farming as a amily. Angela Boss suggested being intentional in how you talk about farming. For example, the catchphrase "Farming as a family" has a very different connotation than "Farming is a business." Within a family, some members may do more of the labor while others make more of the decisions. To whom then do you direct your training? One approach is to train the whole family.

Angela added, "Remember that 'equal' does not mean 'same.' There is room for different roles—but communication and joint decision-making are key!"

Sara Delaney agrees about the importance of farming as a family. After reading the article in *EDN 134*, she wrote, "Working with the whole family is something that we at Episcopal Relief & Development have been trying to do more often when designing our programming with small farmers." She added:

> "It is true that each family member typically has designated roles in the fields, gardens, at home, and at market. We are learning that working with those, rather than against them, or without knowledge of them, is really important. From this starting point, we can have discussions about how these roles could potentially be shifted.
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> "In February I participated in an activity organized by Lutheran World Relief (LWR), as part of their Learning for Gender Integration initiative. I worked with a small team to evaluate a project they had recently completed in Uganda. The 'Namubuka' project ran from 2013 to 2016; it used a 'Farming as a Family Business' (FaaFb) approach to focus on gender issues in the communities, with the aim to improve overall family food security and incomes. The FaaFb methodology involved an intensive series of trainings and conversations over the course of the project. Together, husbands and wives learned about and discussed household gender roles; roles in agriculture; and general business concepts including household budgeting and marketing.
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> **Figure 8.** Husband and wife working together to transport their cassava harvest. *Source: Janat Mutesi*
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> "I did not get to see those training sessions, but I did see the results. For evaluation, we used a unique combination of PhotoVoice and Most Significant Change (two methodologies that go beyond the traditional survey; learn more about them from links found here), in a ten-day process. Participants shared, in their own words, what changed for them as a result of the project. Both project staff members and farmers confirmed that a lot had changed. Men and women showed us daily activity timelines that they had recorded both before and after the trainings. The differences were striking.
>
> "The biggest difference was that, after the FaaFb trainings and conversations, men were working with the women a lot more, both on agricultural tasks and on household chores (preparing dinner, fetching water, etc.). There were still activities deemed 'men's' and 'women's', but there was more crossover, and the roles were based more on individual skills and strengths, rather than only on tradition.
>
> "The overall feedback from project participants was that things were better, both in terms of agricultural production and of family life. When we looked at some of the data from the broader project evaluation, we could see that it was true – for example, women's production of maize increased by 195% and their production of beans increased by 430%! Women increased their total income by an average of 125%. We enjoyed seeing the photos that the farmers took of the changes – everything from women using oxen and ploughs for the first time, to men getting their own bath water, to families sitting together to plan out budgets. Some of these are things that they never thought they would see – and neither did I.
>
> "As Angela said, communication and joint-decision-making are key. Some of the materials from the FaaFb project have helpful discussion guides that could be good starting points [see the Further Resources section for links]. My biggest takeaway is that neither men nor women can be considered in isolation when it comes to family farming. Even if it takes more time, working with families can lead to greater long-term positive change."

CONCLUSION

Women often face challenges that limit their participation in agriculture extension activities and their access to resources. The process of gender analysis can help to reveal gender dynamics in a community. When we understand some of the constraints women face, we can take steps toward greater inclusion.

However, inclusion of women does not mean exclusion of men. Rather, our goal is a society in which men and women work together, for the good of their families and of the community. In this way, we will all benefit.

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FURTHER RESOURCES

INGENAES (Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services). ECHO has benefitted from their resources; they are also recommended by Angela Boss. See especially the gender training activity sheets under the "Apply Tools" page.

80 Tools for Participatory Development, by Frans Geilfus. Angela Boss lists this as a favorite tool for participatory development. It is available in English and Spanish. Chapter 7 (p. 131) has gender tools, each with a one-page description of how to use the tool and a one-page diagram showing a completed tool.

Gender Equality in Agriculture Extension. 2015. ECHO Summary of MEAS Brief #2. Technical Note on Applying Gender-Responsive Value-Chain Analysis in Extension and Advisory Services. MEAS

Advancing Women in Agriculture through Research and Education (AWARE) online resources and reports gathered by Cornell University's AWARE program which is focusing on empowering women in agriculture.

Digital Green shares short, helpful videos.

SAWBO (Scientific Animation without Borders) shares short, animated videos.

Access Agriculture is an "international NGO that encourages the use of training videos to help farmers improve their profits….Videos are all designed to support sustainable agriculture in developing countries." Videos can be watched online or downloaded; audio tracks are also available, for use by radio stations. DVD copies of videos can be requested. Downloads are free, but registration is required in order to access them. Videos are high quality, and video scripts are available—so organizations can coordinate translation into local languages.

Many local language versions of videos are already listed on the website and available to download. Video files for downloading are in mp4 format, and audio files are in mp3 format. The Access Agriculture site recommends a media player that can be downloaded for free if you have trouble playing files in these formats. Videos are available in 14 categories: cereals; roots, tubers and bananas; vegetables; pulses; fruits and nuts; other crops; livestock; fish; integrated pest management; sustainable land management; mechanization; business skills; methods; and other. A search function can be used to search by topic, language or keywords.

Learning for Gender Integration Initiative (LGI) by Lutheran World Relief has links to LGI evaluation reports, a photobook, and a facilitation guide on combining the PhotoVoice and Most Significant Change methodologies.

Farming as a Family Business Training Manual (FaaFB).

Gender Action Learning for Sustainability at Scale (GAL).