



Booklet

Gender and Rice production

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Presentation of AfricaRice and Afrique-learning

AfricaRice:

The rice center for Africa is a panafrican organization engaged on first plan in rice research to enhance livelihoods in Africa by a solid science and effective partnerships. AfricaRice is a research center of CGIAR, which is among partnership in world research for food security future. It is also an intergovernmental association of African member countries. Today, its members are 28 countries. AfricaRice mission is to contribute to poverty reduction and food security in Africa through research, development and partnership activities, aimed to increase productivity and rentability of rice sector in order to guarantee agricultural environment sustainability.

Afrique-Learning:

Afrique-learning is a beninon association which create and manage vocational e-learning courses specially adapted to african youth. Courses are tailor-made in collaboration with an expert in the subject with aim of producing interactive, illustrated, interesting and easy-to-study courses that provide the student with important information in simple and adapted language. Learning is done independently at student rhythm, it is evaluated and a final test allow a course certificate obtainment. Courses are available on computer, smartphone or android tablet, they only require a very modest bandwidth and therefore within the reach of students. Registration and classes are free.

Illustrations credits

- [1] Illustrations delivered by EUDOX BÉATITUDES
- [2] Created by the training team

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Introduction: gender and rice production

Context

In agricultural systems, gender roles may vary from one community to another. Rice is considered a man's crop in some communities, and a woman's crop in others, while in many places, the gender pattern for rice cultivation is complex.

Active involvement of both men and women not only in rice farming but also processing and marketing, calls for integrating gender aspects as a strategic pathway towards sustainable and effective rice development. Though women are acknowledged as critical players in rice-farming systems, they still have challenges to overcome. Their major challenges are limited contact with extension agents and slowness in their adoption of technologies; the reasons behind this include cultural barriers, heavy workload preventing women from devoting 'spare time' to extension service, and also unawareness of the importance of information provided.

In communities, gender relations are not always harmonious nor always conflictual, but it is helpful to empower producers to become gender aware and seek for gender equality. As recommendation, this guide proposes Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs). GTAs use participatory methods to identify gender relations and harmful norms in households and communities and inform better strategies. Through self-reflection and self-awareness, households and communities, with the support of extension agents, come to gradually change their mind on gender relations. They adopt new social relations which enhance gender equality and these social actions become social rules as they are integrated. Thus, women can have more time for extension services, and both women and men participate in different public gatherings and acquire skills together.

The introduction of the smart-valleys approach has been successful in terms of increasing rice productivity. Generated incomes contribute to improve the household's livelihoods. The gains from this new inland valley development approach can be increased and sustained when men and women farmers timely and appropriately obtain the productivity-enhancing knowledge.

Rice farming benefits for women and their household

Households gain from rice production by improving their access to food and nutrition, improving their income and wellbeing and by empowering women:

Improved food and nutritional security

Rice production allows availability of rice within households, thus ensuring food security:

- Adoption of Smart-valleys approach leads to an increase in rice yield.
- From the increased production, more rice is available for household consumption.
- Surplus production is sold. With the income generated from the rice sales, the household can buy other food stuff, hence complementing their nutritional diets.

Improved household income and wellbeing

Permanent availability of rice is an advantage for rice producing households:

- Income which would have been spent on rice can instead be used to buy other products, food or other assets needed by the household.
- Rice in stock can be consumed until harvest of other food crops, hence protecting the household from hunger.



Buying food from the improved outcome [1]

Women empowerment

When women have control over the income generated from rice production and marketing, and as such contribute to the household expenses, they feel more valued:

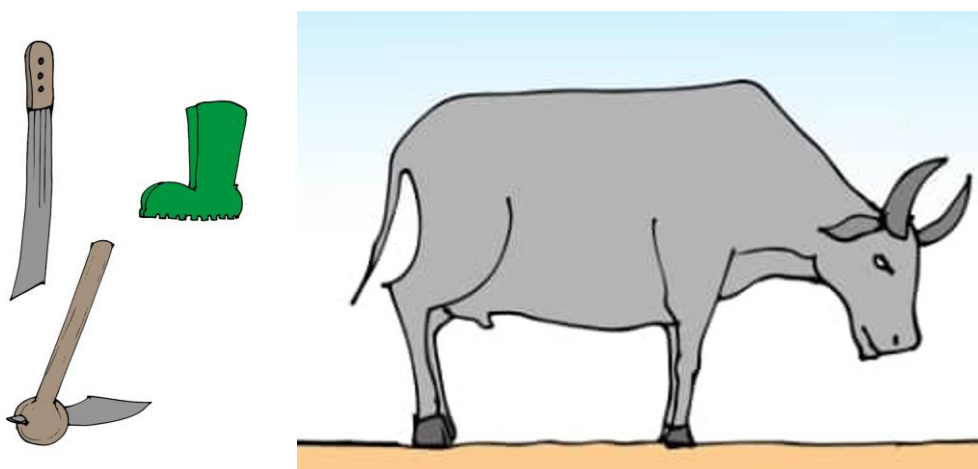
- These expenses can cover food needs, children's schooling or health expenses.
- Women also contribute to large expenses such as construction of house or asset purchases.
- Women can make savings which are used to cover the agricultural expenses in the following season.



Money can be spent for children's schooling [1]

Besides the above described economic empowerment, women become more recognized in decision making within their households. Women are solely responsible for, or become increasingly consulted and jointly with their husbands take decisions on:

- Minor household expenses such as food consumption.
- Major household expenses such as the purchase of equipment and other assets including livestock.



[1]

- Expenses related to the education of children and household members' health.
- Membership in social and economic groups.
- Solving their own problems and concrete livelihood improvements for themselves.

Benefits of improved extension services for women and their households

Access to extension services by women is not just limited to increasing productivity and production. What really matters is to reduce rather than aggravate any existing gender inequalities. Gender sensitive interventions will:

- enable the transformation of gender roles and relations,
- strive for women's empowerment,
- promote gender equality and
- improve household livelihoods and food security, and reduced poverty.

At the aggregate or macro level, addressing gender in agriculture enhances the productivity of the agricultural sector and therefore national food security through increased marketed output.

Obstacles to benefiting from rice cultivation

General constraints

The following constraints potentially affect all rice farmers:

Environmental constraints: include floods, drought and wildfires.

- As a result of climate change, rains are delayed and then there are torrential rains. These rains in turn often cause inland valley flooding. When flooding occurs at flowering stage, only developed inland valleys will still provide some harvest; almost all the crop is lost in undeveloped inland valleys.
- Floods are sometimes followed by drought periods, further destroying the crop.



A flooded inland valley [1]

Land constraints:

- Absence of land titles and security issues can hinder producers from making investments on a land.
- An instance is also noted where rice farmers of a developed inland valley are expropriated by the owner who is afraid that the government will repossess the land.
- Often, the developed area of the inland valley used for rice production is insufficient.

Social constraints include conflicts between farmers and livestock owners who migrate in search for fresh pastures and water.

Financial constraints include the lack of access to credit to cover the rice farming activities such as hiring manpower for land preparation or buying equipment (e.g. tractor, ploughs, etc.).

Constraints in access to production factors include lack of access to quality seeds forcing farmers to recycle their own seeds for several seasons.

Constraints linked to technology adoption

These constraints specifically reduce technology adoption, in particular by women farmers and affect also their household:

Institutional constraints include (a) the lack of capital and the related lack of access to credit especially when the new technology requires a fairly large investment; (b) lack of women farmers' groups through which women can share information and skills; (c) lack of functional markets and good roads to enable buyers to easily reach farmers so that producers can obtain a fair price.

- Access to seeds and fertilizers: women who cultivate their own farms and who do not belong to farmers' groups have difficulties in accessing quality seeds, seeds of improved varieties and chemical fertilizers. They do not have financial resources to buy production inputs.
- When women are grouped into associations or cooperatives, they are rarely in the decision-making roles and management because they are very often less educated. They are also sometimes afraid to speak in public, and do not express their opinions easily, when it could improve their condition.

Constraints on the access to and control of agricultural inputs include inability to access land, lack of decision-making power over land, limited access to labour and other agricultural inputs.

- Management of family labour: women have limited access to family workforce managed by their husbands. In households headed by men, women and children have a duty to first work on their husbands' fields before the women's own fields. The husband has no obligation to work on his wife's field.
- Access to land: often, it is the man who owns the land and his wife can use some of it to cultivate rice. In rare cases, a man gives part of his plot to his wife, who has full rights over that land and can grow her rice there. The fully engaged women rice producers are widows who inherited plots from their late husbands and independent women.
- Lack of financial means for agricultural inputs: women most often do not have an equal control over the income generated from farming.

Constraints related to technologies include uncertainty about outcomes, time constraints and availability of the technology. Women have been noted to adopt new technologies much slower than men mainly due to their limited access to the required complementary inputs compared to men. Women are sometimes unable to follow all instructions required by the technology due to lack of skills or manpower: this is likely to have negative consequences on technology efficiency.

- Women may have challenges in making canals or bunds and preparing land as required for the Smart-Valley approach. Unless assisted by men, they may leave out some components of the Smart-Valleys development.



A man about to test a new technology [1]

Socio-cultural constraints such as cultural perceptions and norms that dictate women's roles and responsibilities, limiting women's access to technology. Women often must seek permission from their male household-heads or village heads to be able to use new technologies. This is linked to the lack of decision power by women.

- Since women are held back by their reproductive roles (e.g. all household chores, caring for children and the elderly), it is difficult for them to attend training.
- Religion also plays an important role. For instance, in strong Muslim households, women do not access to new technology-related information as they cannot freely participate in public gatherings.

Limitations of agricultural extension services include the fact that few extension agents are women which creates distance and may even cause discomfort to some women farmers. In many cases, wives in male-headed households are not allowed to approach alone and freely male extension officers to receive extension advisory services. Farmers also note that the transferred information is inadequate because of low frequency of visits, with limited time and lack of demonstration plots at a centrally designated location.

- Training and information: the male-headed households are the ones that participate in trainings sessions, and as a consequence women become indirect beneficiaries. Women receive information and knowledge through their husbands, unless these are publicly shared. Such information provided to male heads of households is not always transferred adequately to their female dependents.
- Women face difficulties in attending trainings sessions, especially when they are offered in a distant location or at a time which is not convenient for women.



Often only men are participating in training sessions [1]

Integrating and transforming gender in rice production

Overcoming constraints

In order to overcome the constraints on rice farming, farmers improve their rice production by growing the short-duration varieties resistant to climate change and planting rice at the start of the first rains. They also develop the inland valleys, managing water and the water reservoirs to grow alternative crops.

Farmers' groups and women's groups

The benefits of group work are:

- Access to land is facilitated by the group: rice producers' groups can easily request plots from the owners. The field belongs either to the whole group or to the group's members.
- Access to credit: groups facilitate access to credit from microfinance institutions.



A farmer groupe of men and women [1]

Complementarity in labour division

- Agricultural activities requiring more physical effort such as land clearing, tillage, stump removal, etc. are reserved to men. Activities requiring less physical effort such as preparing nursery, seed treatment, levelling, rice sowing or planting, weeding, spreading fertilizer, bird watching, picking up rice bales, winnowing, sorting, etc. are mainly done by women.
- Labour exchange is very useful to cope with periods of peak labour demand. For example, within groups, men or women take turns working in each other's fields until everyone's field is done or respond to specific request for help from a neighbour.

Gender sensitization and integration

- NGOs focusing on women or gender can successfully sensitize actors and accompany women towards equitable access to resources such as land, access to and control exerted over some farming technologies (e.g. seed, fertilizers, mechanized equipment); labour hiring; control of the rice harvest and income from trading their own products and access to knowledge.



An NGO transfers knowledge to women from a village [1]

- Integrative actions aim to include women and other vulnerable groups to take part in society, considering:
 - the time burden of extension agents' activities such as training on different household members depending on the type of household
 - the mobility issues for women: security and safety concerns, the necessity to have permission from the household head to attend meetings or training sessions. This is made more complicated with the interaction of gender with other social categories (for instance age, religion and wealth)
 - the needs, priorities and expectations of women and men and other social categories to ensure everyone benefits equitably from the learning process
 - the need to be consciously sensitive in the conduct of training sessions and workshops.

Integrating gender aspects into training: specifically including women and men farmers in training at the time of introducing or demonstrating the new technology.

- Male extension agents are encouraged to ask their male farmer contacts to include their wives during visits, demonstrations, or farmers' meetings. Village leaders (typically male) are asked to identify women needing extension services. Field agents are required to devote a greater percentage of their time to work with women's groups.
- Women farmers' seminars are organized for women to share with researchers and field staff their solutions to the technical problems specific to women farmers' production systems, and women's field days are organized to celebrate and legitimate women farmers' successes and to promote farmer-to-farmer exchange among women.

Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs)

Beyond addressing the constraints faced by women, it is necessary to analyse the foundations of gender inequity and unequal power relations, with a focus on transforming gender relations to be more equitable. This is achieved through Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs).

Why Gender Transformative Approaches?

- More traditional gender work only focuses on visible manifestations of gender inequality while ignoring, and subsequently not addressing the underlying reasons.
- An exclusive focus on the differences between women and men and their roles lacks differentiation of age, social status, race, ethnicity, etc. In such differentiation, categories become fixed and unchangeable – instead of being diverse and connected by dynamic relations.
 - This leads to stereotypes such as women being seen as perpetually disadvantaged or men as lazy, uncaring and unproductive.
- Women are not an undifferentiated category.



The different roles of women and men [1]

GTAs intend to address structural change starting with an understanding of the local social context to develop the right interventions that will address gender equality among other development outcomes. GTAs:

- identify different needs and interests, uncover harmful norms, roles and relations
- inform better strategies and interventions for transformative outcomes.

Transformative outcomes include for instance (1) enhanced ability and access to information, to engage in decision-making and policy development; (2) improved access to and control of resources; and (3) empowerment of women. Participatory strategies are used for implementing GTAs:

- beyond simply getting people involved to consider the quality of that involvement
- they encourage critical self-reflection and self-awareness via social learning
- they generate new knowledge, learning and insight derived from continual and iterative cycles of action and reflection. The “doing” in turn informs further action
- true participation leads to social transformation.

Participatory approaches do not only concern engagement and involvement but also require a certain reflexivity among those managing, organizing, facilitating and benefiting (whether primarily or secondarily) from others’ participation. In particular, the role, outlook and positionality of the facilitator (as well as other development professionals involved in GTAs) is central.

Three participatory methods for GTAs

(1) Transformative Household Methodology (THM)

- The Transformative Household Methodology (THM) is a tool that aims at creating awareness of intra-household gender relations between women, men, girls and boys.
- The THM identifies the different roles and responsibilities of household members, their access and control over resources and their related benefits. The methodology is developed including various tools such as the Harvard Gender Analytical Tool.
- Advantages:
 - a. uses locally available materials and is illiterate people friendly
 - b. is effective: it stimulates discussion among family members and creates awareness and consensus around critical issues such as division of labour, access and control over resources and benefits for different household members



A discussion between a wife and her husband [1]

- a. knowledge and skills can be disseminated among peers at low cost
- b. has proven to have a fast impact at household level as women, men, girls and boys change their attitudes towards family relationships. After having conducted THM exercises, workloads are more equally shared by family members and women's involvement in decision making increases
- c. is family-focused: it is inclusive as it works at household level and all family members can equally participate, contribute their opinions, be heard, and develop common action plans for improvement
- d. is sustainable: it triggers mindset change that lasts beyond project implementation. Action plans are followed up by community/group dialogue, that sustains the impact in the long term. Trained households become role models of change within the community
- e. is scalable: the THM can be easily adopted by different development actors (government, NGOs) for replication in various contexts as it is cost-effective, easy to understand and participatory.

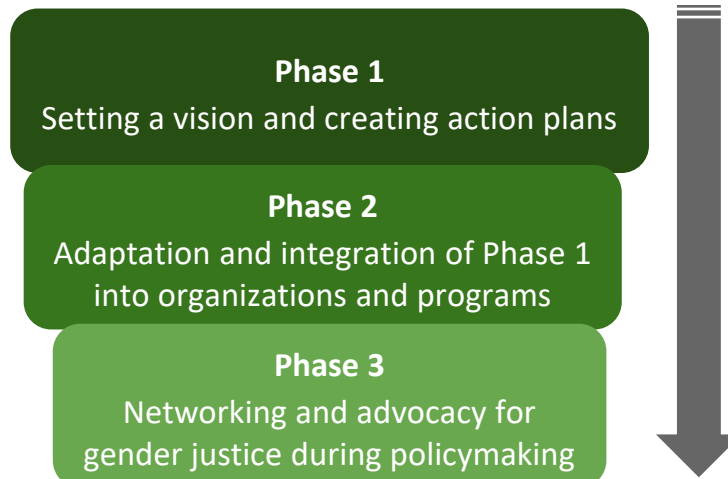
(2) Gender Action Learning System (GALS)

- The Gender Action Learning System (GALS) is a community-led empowerment methodology designed to develop capacity, ownership and leadership of men and women in order to give them more control over their lives.



GALS aim to empower both men and women [1]

- GALS is not only 'for women' but an approach for women and men to address gender issues across various themes, such as value chain development, extension work and livelihoods.
- GALS consists of a set of principles related to gender justice, participation and leadership, and a series of visual diagrammatic tools that are used for visioning, analysis, change planning and tracking by individuals, households and stakeholder groups or in multi-stakeholder settings. GALS can be implemented on its own or integrated into existing development projects.
- GALS has three phases:
 - Phase 1: Rocky road to diamond dreams: visioning and catalyzing change.** This phase has five steps: (1) setting the vision; (2) diagnosing the current situation; (3) identifying opportunities and constraints that will affect realization of the vision; (4) setting targets and milestones; and (5) creating action plans for achieving the vision (3-6 months).
 - Phase 2: Integrating gender justice.** This phase integrates phase 1 learning, processes and tools into organizations and programs.
 - Phase 3: Gender justice movement.** This phase is ongoing, dynamic and involves self-motivated innovation, networking and advocacy for gender justice at all levels, including macro-level policy-making.
- All phases can be implemented sequentially or in parallel and adapted to specific purposes and contexts.



The 3 GALS' implementation phases [2]

(3) Community Conversation (CC)

- Community Conversation (CC) is an approach that involves a series of facilitated dialogues in which people from the same community have open discussions about what might be holding them back from achieving their development goals.
- The topics covered include individual and community values, behaviors, and sensitive issues (such as gender inequity) that affect their lives.
- The CC approach:
 - a. CC recognizes that communities have the capacity to overcome their development challenges. It also recognizes that changing community's harmful attitudes and behaviors is complex and needs supportive facilitation.
 - b. CC is flexible methodology whose primary purpose is to bring community members together to identify and discuss solutions to their own development problems.
 - c. Stages: (1) *relationship building* to gain the community's confidence and trust, and to engage in the change process; (2) *concern identification* to identify and map community concerns; (3) *concern exploration* to help the community explore their concerns in depth, i.e., the magnitude of the concern and its underlying factors; (4) *decision-making*; (5) *action or implementation* to help the community carry out decisions and action plans; and (6) *reflection* to review changed values, attitudes and practices. Each stage has specific tools.



Une conversation communautaire [1]

For more advice on GTAs see Wong et al., 2019 (in the reference list)

Context on gender and empowerment

Women empowerment

In the field of development economics, women's empowerment is defined as the process through which women acquire the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them (Kabeer, 1999).

The ability to exercise individual choice is based on three interrelated elements – *resources*, *agency*, and *achievements*:

- **Resources** refer to material, human, and social expectations and allocations.
- **Agency** is the ability or sense of ability to define one's goals, act upon them, and decide on their own strategic life outcomes.
- **Achievements** include a variety of outcomes ranging from improved well-being to achieving equal representation of women in politics.

Women's empowerment is therefore the process of having and using resources in an agentic manner (meaning that one is an active agent in the process) to reach certain achievements.

Research has studied a variety of very different components of women's empowerment with measures such as agency, autonomy, capacity for action, self-determination, and self-confidence. All definitions stress that women's empowerment is a multifaceted concept, which includes different components and assumes that empowerment is a process from being un-empowered to becoming empowered.

In agriculture, women are recognized to play a critical and potentially transformative role in agricultural growth in developing countries. However, they face persistent obstacles and economic constraints limiting further inclusion in agriculture. The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) measures the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agriculture sector in an effort to identify ways to overcome those obstacles and constraints.

The Index aims to increase understanding of the connections between women's empowerment, food security, and agricultural growth. It measures the roles and extent of women's engagement in the agriculture sector in five domains:

1. decision-making about agricultural production
2. access to and decision-making power over productive resources
3. control over use of income
4. leadership in the community, and
5. time use.

It also measures women's empowerment relative to men within their households.

Gendered roles

The productive, reproductive, community-managing and community-politics roles described by Moser (1989) are defined:

- *Productive roles* include work done for pay in cash or kind whether it is through market production with an exchange-value, subsistence or home production with actual use-value or potential exchange-value.
- *Reproductive roles* comprise biological reproduction and care and maintenance of the current and future workforce. As such, reproductive roles go beyond child-bearing and child-rearing responsibilities to also include the domestic tasks done by women, required to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labor force.
- *Community managing roles* are regarded as an extension of the reproductive roles, to ensure the provision and maintenance of scarce resources of collective consumption, such as water and health care. This role is mostly voluntary unpaid work, undertaken in 'free' time.
- *Community political role* is about organizing at the formal political level, often within the framework of national politics. It is usually paid work, either directly or indirectly, through status or power (ILO, 1998).

Gender sensitive training and workshop

Generic recommendations and advice for gender sensitive work:

- Adopt a style that involves empowering participants to understand the need to change what they are doing: not directing or commanding to change.
- Manage power and conflict as they may limit knowledge transfer.
- Facilitators as role models who promote inclusion at all times.
- Content:
 - think about the points of view of all participant groups and their starting knowledge
 - what are the respective roles, skills and experiences of women and men related to the topic of the workshop?
- Materials: documents, pictures, case studies
 - Do not include stereotypes or elements of unequal gender and power relationships.
- Participants:
 - put guidelines and specifications about who you want and why
 - you may also need to speak with the husbands of women.

- Time and duration:
 - you may need to structure the workshop in different ways according to your participants. E.g., men may prefer whole day sessions, women may have to leave the workshop when the school day ends: you need to make arrangements so they do not miss important information.
- Active and full participation: make a special effort to help women and marginalized social groups to speak up and be understood.
 - do not allow vocal people to monopolize the discussion
 - seek multiple answers or perspectives to questions
 - accept what women say, encourage women to express their opinions, directly ask, sit with shy participants and get to know them.

For more recommendations and advice, see Drucza and Abebe, 2018 (in the reference list)



A gender sensitive training and workshop in a village [1]

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