

Tackling Gender Issues in Sustainable Land Management



A Modular Instrument for Use in Rural Development Projects with a Focus on Sustainable Land Management

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Frequently used abbreviations

- GAD** Gender and Development
- GO** Governmental Organisation
- NGO** Non-Governmental Organisation
- NRM** Natural Resource Management
- PLA** Participatory Learning and Action
- PRA** Participatory Rural Appraisal
- SLM** Sustainable Land Management
- WID** Women in Development



INTRODUCTION

Gender Issues in SLM



WHAT'S GENDER GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Isn't it enough to have small-scale projects for women and women's groups?

Why should a gender approach in sustainable land management activities be adopted?

Do project activities and technical measures really influence gender gaps?

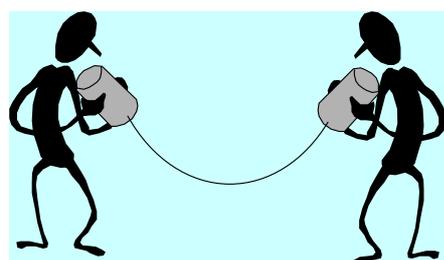
How can a gender approach be integrated in everyday work?

Such questions frequently come up in the arena of rural development. They show how challenging it is to understand the connections between gender issues and environmental issues and deal with them adequately. Both "gender" and "environment" are cross-cutting themes with a high degree of conceptual and methodo-



logical complexity; this makes it all the more difficult to achieve a clear grasp of the links between them.

Lack of understanding and fear of this complexity are the main reasons why gender aspects of sustainable land management are still either widely neglected or dealt with insufficiently – despite the fact that their significance in local land use systems is now broadly acknowledged. Hence it is a major – but not insurmountable – challenge to develop operational support and working instruments that provide a simple understanding of gender issues in sustainable land management and offer project staff adequate practical approaches. This publication provides tools that can help to meet this challenge.



TARGET AUDIENCE

“Tackling Gender Issues in Sustainable Land Management” specifically targets **development staff at the project and programme levels**, with a view to helping them find practical ways of addressing gender issues in rural development activities.

However, as both environment and gender are cross-cutting themes with implications at every organisational level, this working instrument also extends into the sphere of **policy dialogue and organisational development**.

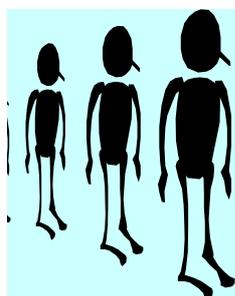


OBJECTIVES

Tackling Gender Issues in Natural Resource Management is designed to:

- ➔ increase awareness of the importance of gender in sustainable land management;
- ➔ enhance understanding of gender issues in relation to sustainable development by discussing specific links between men's and women's social roles and their respective uses of natural resources;
- ➔ support development cooperation staff in planning, managing and evaluating projects and programmes that aim to integrate an adequate gender approach in strategies for sustainable resource use.

This working instrument aims to support users in their efforts to **mainstream gender and environmental issues** by making better use of the links and mechanisms that exist between the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels.



IT'S EVERYONE'S CONCERN!

"Tackling Gender Issues in Sustainable Land Management" helps to:

- ➔ understand the links between organisational levels with regard to gender and sustainable land management:

Local projects and NGOs will find it particularly useful to understand some of the complex interactions that are involved in development work. Initiatives that are taken at one level with no understanding of issues and approaches at other levels can prove detrimental to the overall goal of sustainability.

- ➔ recognise that dissemination and mediation of information is a crucial activity and requires special support:

There is a need to share grassroots-level information on gender and land use issues and to communicate this information to higher levels of decision- and policy-making. Specialists who work at the local level have a key role to play in this respect. They must be aware of their role as mediators of information. At the same time, they must



also be entrusted to play this role, and given the means to enhance their capacities. Moreover, actors at higher levels must be committed to providing opportunities in this respect.



THE CHALLENGE CAN BE MET!

“Tackling Gender Issues in Sustainable Land Management” also demonstrates that the challenge of integrating a gender perspective in sustainable land management can definitely be met –for example that:

- Practical ways of including gender issues in sustainability approaches **can** be defined for every development context;
- The widespread yet unsatisfactory approach of isolating gender in a special unit or project activity **can** be improved;
- A gender equality approach in sustainable land management is **not just another addition** to the many tasks that already overburden the agenda of development cooperation;
- A specific gender perspective **can complete and even facilitate** other approaches that pursue the overall objective of making local livelihoods more secure in a more sustainable world.





HOW TO USE THE MODULES:

Practice first, theory next if necessary!

The modular design of this instrument allows for individual approaches. Depending on their personal experience and needs, readers can start with any of the modules and decide whether the conceptual or practical modules are the most appropriate for them.

The general focus of this working instrument is on sustainable land management issues, as the modules are designed to serve rural development planners. But the wider development relevance of the issues discussed will become obvious throughout.



MODULE 1: Approach and principles

Commitment to gender equality and poverty alleviation

A brief introduction presents the development policy context that informs this instrument. The focus on gender issues in sustainable land management is part of a sustainable livelihood approach used by most development agencies today; it contributes to the overall goals of sustainability, gender-balanced development and poverty alleviation.

Three guiding principles

The approach and the recommendations for gender-sensitive planning, monitoring and evaluation at the field and programme levels presented follow three principles that have emerged from lessons learned in the course of past activities.

General recommendations

Module 1 ends with a summary of important strategic elements that need to be taken into account at the level of projects, programmes, policy formulation and organisational development.



MODULE 2: Key issues, strategic approaches and entry points

Five key issues

Module 2 is the central part of the instrument for readers seeking ways of implementing the approach. It is especially designed to emphasise the potential that arises from interactions between gender strategies and sustainable land management. Five key issues concerning gender in sustainable land management are formulated. For every key issue, a **strategic approach** is articulated, followed by **practical suggestions** for project activities.

Connections between the issues

The key issues are strongly interrelated and reinforce each other; this is also the case for the key entry points and suggestions.

No checklists!

The lists of suggestions are not meant to be used as complete checklists for analysing the sustainability of a project; instead, they are designed to encourage reflection, support activities and guide data collection. Only rarely will a project be able to address every key issue; nor will it ever be able to take up all of the suggestions.

Personal experience is crucial!

This instrument is designed to enable incorporation of personal views or of a project's way of dealing with gender issues in rural development, as well as assessment of the work done so far. It also shows how initiatives may extend into other spheres when the need arises and resources become available.



MODULE 3: Conceptual background

Conceptual background of the key issues

To provide a broader understanding of each key issue, important elements of the gender debate within the context of sustainable land management are presented. Whereas Module 2 focuses on aspects that might support sustainability, the conceptual background of each key issue presented in Module 3 offers deeper insight into



negative development trends and destructive processes that currently threaten the world's natural and social resource base.

Embedding the issues in a more general context

As it is crucial to conceive of gender issues as part of more general local and global problems, Module 2 begins with an introduction on, the conceptual background of the 'Local Context, External Influences and Support'.



MODULES 4, 5, 6: Concrete examples

Case studies from Nicaragua, India and Kenya

These examples illustrate how complex gender and sustainability issues are in the context of field activities, and how they were addressed in the field. Much more could be done to make project field experience a valuable source of learning and a basis for developing and implementing informed strategies.



MODULE 7: References

- Module 7 provides information on the authors of Modules 4, 5 and 6, as well as on the projects involved. The bibliographies provided by these projects are excellent sources of further information on gender and sustainable land management.
- Module 7 also lists a selection of further tools for gender mainstreaming and sustainable land management. These tools address issues such as gender in group formation, capacity building, access to resources, communication networks, education and training, development cooperation institutions, etc.



MODULE 1

Gender Issues in SLM: Development Policy Context and Overall Principles

Overview



Commitment to gender equality and poverty alleviation



Three working principles for incorporating gender issues in SLM



General recommendations for institutionalising a gender-sensitive approach in sustainable development



Commitment to gender equality and poverty alleviation

Like most major development agencies and NGOs in the North and the South today, “Tackling Gender Issues in Sustainable Land Management” is committed to a gender equality approach. A gender equality approach is an integral part of a poverty alleviation approach. Both take into account that the socio-economic status and the development potential of an individual depend on many social factors, in particular gender, defined by the OECD-DAC as “the economic, social, political and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female” (OECD 1998).

Gender equality and its implications for development cooperation

“Gender equality requires equal enjoyment by women and men of socially-valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Gender equality does not mean that men and women become the same, but that their opportunities and life chances are equal. The emphasis on gender equality and women’s empowerment does not presume a particular model of gender equality for all societies and cultures, but reflects a concern that women and men have equal opportunities to make choices about what gender equality means and work in partnership to achieve it. Because of current disparities, equal treatment of women and men is insufficient as a strategy for gender equality. Equal treatment in the context of inequalities can mean the perpetuation of disparities. Achieving gender equality will require changes in institutional practices and social relations through which disparities are reinforced and sustained. It also requires a strong voice for women in shaping their societies.

OECD. 1998. *DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and...*

If projects aim to ensure equal benefits for men and women, they must improve their capability to analyse ex-ante and ex-post impacts of development activities on different social groups as well as on men and women in their respective societies, and adjust strategies accordingly (gender mainstreaming).

Gender Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming is the overall strategy adopted in Beijing to support the goal of gender equality. A mainstreaming strategy has two major aspects: the integration of gender equality concerns into the analyses and formulation of all policies, programmes and projects; initiatives to enable women as well as men to formulate and express their views and participate in decision-making across all development issues.

OECD. 1998. *DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and*



International conventions provide a framework for action, as in the cases of Agenda 21 (Rio 1992), Cairo 1994 or the Women's Platform for Action (Beijing 1995), which identified the following gender-specific objectives as important requirements for sustainable development:

- **Promotion** of women's access to land,
- **Support** for participation of women in decision-making processes, and
- **Reduction** of women's workloads.

These objectives should be pursued either directly, e.g. by legal means, or indirectly by eliminating obstacles to women's full and equal participation in sustainable development and equal access to and control over resources. In addition, the Habitat II Agenda and the Istanbul declaration arising from the 1996 Istanbul Conference broadly address gender equality.

Gender equity strategies

"Gender equity strategies ... are used to eventually attain gender equality. Equity is the means, equality is the result. ... Consensus now exists that sustainable development – especially poverty reduction – will not be achieved unless we eradicate inequalities between women and men."

CIDA. 1999.

Gender Equity and Gender Equality

Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must often be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality.

Gender equality means that women and men enjoy the same status. Gender equality means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development, and to benefit from the results.

Gender equality is therefore the equal valuing by society of both the similarities and differences between women and men, and the varying roles that they play.

CIDA. 1996

Current discussions about Gender and Development (GAD) approaches stress the importance of an active integration of men into processes aiming at gender equality. Without denying that men and women have conflicting interests, development organisations increasingly emphasise that both men and women must be part of a gender equality strategy. Win-win solutions in balanced household or societal arrangements must be sought in order to enable both men and women to perform a useful social and economic role, find a satisfying self-identity and perceive the empowerment of the other sex as a form of development potential that benefits both sexes, instead of as competition. Where households, families or societies develop multi-strategies with men and women contributing towards a common goal, the benefits for individuals as well as for society at large are maximised.



Three working principles for incorporating gender issues in SLM

Development organisations generally agree that gender-sensitive and environmentally sound land management must be supported at the local, regional, national and international levels. To achieve these goals, this support must be based on a thorough analysis of land use systems and the roles played by men and women at the local level, as well as on a proper understanding of the roles played by external actors in socially sensitive processes.



Yemen: Farm women working in the field

Photo: FAO



India: Women and men learning floriculture technologies in a model centre

Photo: FAO



Niger: People reclaiming land

Photo: FAO



Syria: Women learn to tend vegetables in a greenhouse

Photo: FAO



Mexico: A family receives a credit for repairing their fishing boat

Photo: FAO



Honduras: Small farmers diversify their crops

Photo: FAO



“Tackling Gender Issues in SLM” has defined **THREE BASIC PRINCIPLES** as underlying guidelines for each of its strategic approaches to, and recommendations for gender-sensitive planning, monitoring and evaluation at the field and programme levels:



PRINCIPLE 1

TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL DIFFERENCES

At the start of the new millennium, ecological and social differences at the local level have become a major focal point in international development cooperation. This is the result of experience indicating that projects often fail if these factors are not sufficiently taken into account in project planning and implementation.

At its simplest, gender analysis entails seeing what our eyes have been trained not to see!”

World Bank, 2000.

Everywhere in the world, ecological and social contexts do indeed vary a great deal. Nature has combined elements into complex ecosystems – and human beings and cultures have evolved along with them. Societies have learned to use resources in many different ways. They have developed systems by which labour is divided among various well-defined groups, in order to use natural resources in ways that ensure their survival and evolution. The social cooperation between labour groups shapes the roles and tasks, rights and responsibilities, and access to wealth and power of every member in each society. Modes of social cooperation are submitted to constant change; they can also be actively transformed. Various degrees of equality within social cooperation networks are easily recognisable with regard to social strata; they are equally significant – but less acknowledged – between men and women (e.g. the gender division of labour) and between young and old.

Concepts of sustainable development increasingly take into account ecological and social differences. This influences activities that aim to alleviate poverty and promote gender-balanced development. Development specialists acknowledge that the impacts of development efforts are, first, always specific to a local environment, and second, always different for the members of different social strata as well as for men and women in each social group. Thus, to achieve development for the benefit of all, a closer look at local natural conditions and local distribution of labour and power in societies living in specific places is a necessity. Researchers, development staff at field level, and local people need to share their very specific knowledge and approaches.



PRINCIPLE 2

DEVELOP NEW NEGOTIATION PROCESSES AND NEW FORMS OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Social strata are responsible for a society being structured vertically into higher and lower, richer and poorer, more or less powerful groups, classes, castes and races. Power and decision-making are usually unequally distributed in favour of an elite, and political institutions are often male-oriented: this hinders balanced exchange between all members of a society. Development cooperation has thus increasingly focused on participation and empowerment of marginal groups and women.

Whereas social strata are permeable to a certain degree, gender is the line that divides every society and every strata into a male world and a female world. Frequently, economic activities are clearly differentiated along gender lines. In the rural context, women use other natural resources and processes than men – and they use

“ Why is it that challenging gender inequalities is seen as tampering with traditions of culture, and thus taboo, while challenging inequalities in terms of wealth and class is not?”

Mona Mehta. 1991.

them differently. For example, men may use forests as a source of timber, as the place where they produce charcoal, as a hunting area or for bee-keeping; women collect litter for livestock, firewood, medicinal plants and foods such as wild fruit and nuts. This gender division of labour leads women and men to have different perceptions and knowledge of, as well as interest in their ecological and social environment. Men and women are also affected in different ways by social and economic change. Experience has shown that women bear the brunt of negative development processes and benefit less from positive trends. At the same time, their voices are insufficiently heeded and they are not adequately integrated in decision-making processes.

Strategies for sustainable land management and sustainable development that benefit all stakeholders can only be elaborated if men’s and women’s knowledge systems, perceptions and interests are combined. In order to enable both men and women to take part in negotiation processes and social dialogue, existing institutions – which are often elite-dominated and male-oriented – need to be transformed gradually on the basis of social consensus. Moreover, new institutions and platforms for debate and decision-making must be created, and new information channels are necessary.



PRINCIPLE 3

INVOLVE BOTH MEN AND WOMEN IN THE SEARCH FOR BALANCED LABOUR ARRANGEMENTS BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE HOUSEHOLD

As emphasised by gender analyses, current socio-economic change both shapes and destroys the cooperation between, and complementarity of men’s and women’s economic spheres. It widens the gap between them with regard to access to resources, legal status and development potential. Family and social structures break up and poverty is “feminised”. Yet men and women are not homogenous groups that can be stereotyped as “winners” or “losers”, “victims” or “oppressors”. Both have to reorient themselves and find new identities. Men are losing their traditional, often idealised role as “bread-winners”. They are forced to migrate, are caught in conflicts of interest between traditional and modern lifestyles, or oppressed by labour conditions and poverty. They have to struggle to find a new, satisfying self-identity. Increasingly, men’s drug abuse and violence – often turned against the women and the children in their families – and their fear of women’s empowerment are seen in the context of their inability to redefine their gender role in family and society under changing circumstances.

„Development without women is like a bird trying to take off with only one wing.“

Abeba Habtom, Director, Ministry of Education, Asmara, Eritrea

Without denying the reality of women’s generally inferior socio-economic status and power and the need to give special attention to their empowerment, emerging strategies try to make allies of men in the struggle for gender equity. Among such strategies are: making the specificity of the other sex’s situation transparent, including men in gender work, or concentrating on working with cooperative households. These activities aim to demonstrate and increase the potential for both sexes that lies in formulating balanced labour arrangements both within and outside the household. Where such work arrangements are equitable, each individual contributes his or her specific share to the household or community economy. This shapes his or her self-identity in a major way, and defines the role of the individual in society.



General recommendations for institutionalising a gender-sensitive approach in sustainable development

The following points may serve as an overview of important implications of the framework and main principles formulated above on the institutionalisation of a gender-sensitive approach. They are grouped according to projects and programmes, policy formulation, and organisational development. Yet as these levels are linked, recommendations always have relevance at all other levels; this should also be taken into account.

At the level of projects and programmes

- From the beginning, consider both women and men, their experiences, strategic needs, priorities and strategies, and involve key actors in the assessment, design, monitoring and evaluation of interventions. Work with mixed and separate groups, and consolidate findings with local communities.
- Neither “communities”, nor “households”, nor “men” and “women” are homogenous units. Analyse the roles of both local women and men in different social strata, and promote restoration or reformulation of balanced social, familial or gender arrangements.
- Include gender and environmental issues and women’s specific concerns in the terms of reference for studies, consultancies, and evaluations related to land management.

At the level of policy formulation

- Support national implementation of Agenda 21 (Rio 1992), the Women’s Platform for Action (Beijing 1995) and other international agreements and conventions.
- Collaborate with national institutions such as ministries of agriculture, environment, and social welfare, as well as with women’s organisations, gender studies centres, environmental organisations, and agricultural research centres, with a view to enhancing partnership and bottom-up approaches on gender and sustainable land management issues.
- Use the creativity of both men and women to make sure that debating gender issues is acknowledged as an opportunity to promote social consensus for the benefit of all, and does not lead to mistrust and prejudice.

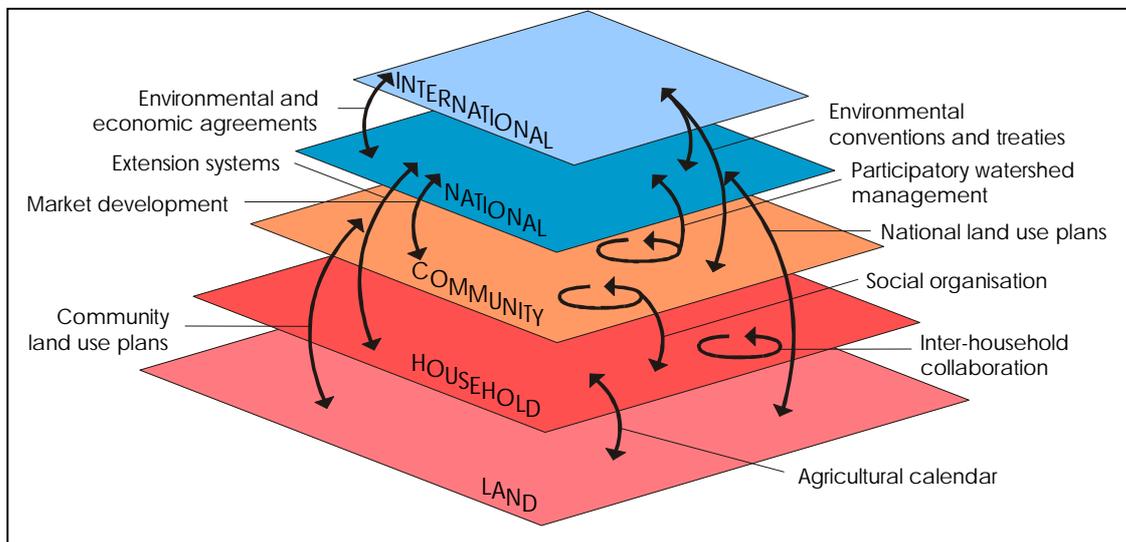
At the level of organisational development

- Initiate and sustain structural changes that enable gender-balanced participation of staff at headquarters, regional offices, and within partner organisations.
- Promote capacity building, training and feedback on combined gender, land use and environment issues.
- Ensure ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the social learning process.



In between the levels

- Take a closer look at how micro-, meso-, and macro-levels interact and where there might be points of intervention for concerted measures.
- Address forms of exchange between the levels that disadvantage rural areas and weaken or even destroy local potential for self-regulatory processes and sustainable land management in the local context.
- Counter-balance such exchanges through a coordination of political, economic and social forces at every level and in all institutions, and develop concerted measures and frameworks that allow for, and promote sustainable land use at the local level.



There is a need for linked and balanced economic, social and political forces between all levels.



MODULE 2

Gender Issues in SLM: Key Issues, Strategic Approaches and Entry Points

Overview



KEY ISSUE I: Division of labour and responsibilities

Objective: Work to achieve gender-balanced division of labour in sustainable land management

- Strategic Approach
- Four crucial questions for investigation and practical suggestions



KEY ISSUE II: Local stakeholders and decision-making processes

Objective: Ensure empowerment of men and women in decision-making processes

- Strategic Approach
- Four crucial questions for investigation and practical suggestions



KEY ISSUE III: Access to and control over natural resources

Objective: Ensure long-term tenure rights for stakeholders

- Strategic Approach
- Four crucial questions for investigation and practical suggestions



KEY ISSUE IV: Conflicting and common interests in land use

Objective: Transform conflict over resources into potential

- Strategic Approach
- Four crucial questions for investigation and practical suggestions



KEY ISSUE V: Knowledge and skills

Objective: Strengthen and combine existing knowledge systems and communication networks

- Strategic Approach
- Four crucial questions for investigation and practical suggestions



KEY ISSUE I: Division of labour and responsibilities



OBJECTIVE: Work to achieve gender-balanced division of labour in sustainable land management

Strategic Approach

- ➡ Take a closer look at the multiple roles and responsibilities that a society ascribes to men and women in different socio-economic groups.
- ➡ Understand and support men and women in the reproductive duties they perform in their specific society, and contribute to searching for new, balanced social, familial or household arrangements.
- ➡ Pay special attention to women, as their contribution to agriculture and their interest in natural resources are generally underestimated and increasingly under constraint.

Four crucial questions for investigation and practical suggestions

I/1 How can the project obtain data and disseminate knowledge about men's and women's contributions to the local economy?

Sex-differentiated demographic data are generally available today at a national level. But specific data on the contributions made by men and women to the local economy and to land management, and on gender constraints and practical needs are still widely lacking. Projects operating in local rural contexts are particularly in need of such data.



Practical suggestions:

- Conduct multi-level stakeholder analyses and make sure that attention is given to gender aspects at all levels.
- Use both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect and manage data (scientific studies, PRA/PLA activities, etc.).
- Involve men and women equally in data collection and management. Work with mixed groups as well as with men's and women's groups of different ages.



- Collect and differentiate data for women and men according to various socio-economic groups and also consider stages in the life cycles of households and individuals.
- Make seasonal calendars and 24-hour daily activity charts for men and women.
- Discuss and analyse data at the local level and make them available to higher levels in an appropriate form.
- Make knowledge accessible to certain target groups whether it is requested or not. Proactively create a demand for it.
- Make the inclusion of gender-disaggregated data a required format for all monitoring and evaluation procedures.

1/2 How can local people be integrated in project activities?

In general, women's daily schedules are filled with many family, social and productive duties. Including women in project activities might increase their usually heavy workloads. Moreover, integrating men into project activities might leave women with more work to do. Thus the major challenge is to find activities that are in the profound interest of both men and women and fit into their respective working patterns.



Practical suggestions:

- Conduct participatory time allocation assessments and surveys before, during, and after the implementation of project activities.
- Assess the effects on women's workload and identify the potential and most suitable time for women to engage in project-related activities.
- Assess unemployment or hidden underemployment of both sexes and all age groups.
- Let women decide whether it is too cumbersome for them to participate, and whether they want to choose or nominate alternative participants.
- If women do not want to participate in project activities, investigate why and rethink the project approach.
- Work out proper time scheduling in long-term activities that need coordination between several actors.
- Make trade-offs between the project and women's/men's commitments.
- Take care that women are not simply misused as a source of cheap labour for the project, or instrumentalised for WID or GAD statistics.



I/3 How can common interests in sustainable land management become a driving force in project activities?

Common interests in resources, resource use, and household economy exist, even if men and women do not simply perform complementary roles. In a joint assessment these interests can be identified as a starting point for new, common strategies to promote sustainable land management on the one hand, and for identification of new economic options on the other.



Practical suggestions:

- Assess the local resource situation and identify resources that are at risk as well as resources that are not being fully exploited (PRA, scientific research).
- Conduct a joint assessment of gender duties and needs, and of constraints imposed by the unavailability of resources (for example time needed to fetch firewood or water). For both men and women (and for project staff as well), a joint assessment is usually an eye-opener concerning the role of women as farmers with specific capacity, experience and needs.
- Organise a series of broadly based, consultative workshops – as diagnostic platforms on resource use issues for sound community development.
- On the basis of these diagnostic platforms, organise a participatory workshop to negotiate consensus on an action plan.
- Entrust a technical group with fine-tuning the modalities of implementation and later presenting it to the stakeholders.

I/4 What project strategies might induce men to support a gender equality approach?

There is a strong link between psychological and social problems as expressed in alcohol and drug abuse, violence against women and children, or men’s difficulties finding meaningful roles in their family (‘crisis of masculinity’). Whereas a ‘women only’ project might arouse resistance, the insight that both sexes may benefit from a development activity can make men strong allies in the quest for gender equality.



Practical suggestions:

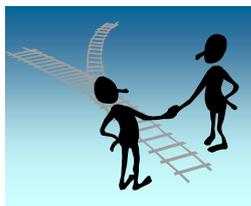
- Ensure that project activities not only support the interests of individuals but also benefit the family and the community.
- Analyse the structure and composition of households in the project area. Distinguish between female- and male-headed households, and households with women as de facto household heads.



- Analyse household strategies in the project area. New on- and off-farm activities should be based on, or complement existing multi-faceted strategies and preserve or strengthen the roles of individuals in the household economy.
- Focus identification and support of multi-strategies within the family, while preserving and strengthening the roles and responsibilities of all family members.
- Support opportunities for women to earn cash income.
- Facilitate processes of transparent self-evaluation by the communities, which should then culminate in joint action planning.
- Emphasise the contributions of men and women towards a better livelihood, thus showing that empowerment of women need not mean disempowerment of men.
- Give preference to strategies that include men and are oriented towards new and balanced arrangements in society, family or household.
- Provide access to micro-credits, and establish and support local savings and credit schemes, especially when wages are paid by the project.



KEY ISSUE II: Local stakeholders and decision-making processes



OBJECTIVE: Ensure empowerment of men and women in decision-making processes

Strategic Approach

- ➡ Take a closer look at the distribution of power within society, family and household.
- ➡ Try to influence the balance between gender duties and the corresponding decision-making power to make it more even – otherwise, these duties will not be performed effectively.
- ➡ Give special attention to the situation of women, as they increasingly have to take over some of the men’s agricultural activities without sufficient decision-making power to develop and implement adequate strategies.

Four crucial questions for investigation and practical suggestions

II/1 What decision-making bodies can be relied on in the project area?

Traditional institutions involved in negotiation and administration must play a role in the formulation of strategies for sustainable land management. Where such structures are either too weak or non-existent, important decisions might not be taken, or certain groups (i.e. women, subordinated groups, the poor, etc.) might be excluded from decision-making processes. In this case, existing structures must be strengthened or new ones developed in order to exert a binding authority on all stakeholders.



Practical suggestions:

- Identify traditional institutions related to resource management that could be enlisted for project collaboration.
- Assess the extent to which traditional institutions are male-dominated and elite-oriented and do not sufficiently integrate women’s concerns or the interests of marginal groups.



- Support traditional structures that aim to spread responsibility more broadly and initiate a participatory process leading to a new institutional framework.
- Make it clear that institutions must perceive sustainable resource use and sustainable development as common goals that must be defined in consultation with all resource users.
- Make sure that decision-making authorities are decentralised, locally anchored and transparent: they will thus offer the best basis for forms of self-regulation and strategy formulation that are binding for all parties.
- Make sure that the project institutionalises gender internally (credibility).

11/2 What existing support systems can be identified and used to strengthen men's and women's access to natural, social, human, and capital assets?

For an individual or a social group, the power to make and enforce decisions about land management depends in particular on access to, and control over land and natural resources, income, community resources, information, etc., as well as on institutional support (traditional social support systems, assistance from a government or an NGO). The challenge is to strategically use existing support systems to advance project goals.



Practical suggestions:

- Differentiate between stakeholders and determine the extent to which stakeholders have access to existing support systems.
- Analyse the extent to which women at all socio-economic levels have access to support systems – either directly or through men in their families.
- Inform stakeholders about existing support systems (such as governmental or non-governmental support, legal systems, traditional support systems, etc.) and help them to gain access to them.
- Enhance informal support and solidarity networks outside households. These are often critically important for female household members as a means of influencing and taking part in decision-making processes.
- Investigate where land is not cultivated adequately because of absentee owners (migrants, out-married women) and how this land could be regained for communal use.
- Assist in enhancing rules and regulations for commons and strengthen communal management of resources.
- Advocate the interests of women, as they often depend to a large degree on the use of commons and marginal land.
- Help women to gain increased benefit from marketing agricultural products (for example, fair trade and labels).



11/3 What respective perceptions do men and women have of the impact of development activities on social and gender relations?

Decision-making mechanisms and criteria are difficult to study ('private matter'); however, it can be assumed that men and women make rational decisions within their respective spheres of activity and act accordingly, and that these decisions can be exposed. Resistance to project activities is an important indicator that the measures suggested do not fit into the local system. It is important to exactly determine the reasons for this resistance and whether they are related to gender issues and power structures.



Practical suggestions:

- Conduct an in-depth investigation of local stakeholders' perceptions of project activities and of the project's role in development.
- Assess stakeholders' perceptions of the impact on gender relations, roles and duties of externally proposed or induced measures.
- Analyse the perceptions of women and marginal groups – as resistance to, or low interest in project activities might exist and remain unexpressed where decision-making power is low.
- Analyse how unbalanced power structures influence or shape women's and dependent people's perceptions and opinions (exploitative relationships between the sexes, patron-client relations, corruption).
- Assess the extent to which the resistance of dominant stakeholders is due to fear of losing a dominant position in unbalanced social and gender relations.
- Do not attempt to overcome resistance by offering short-term incentives at project level.

11/4 Do cooperative households or social groups exist to start with?

Households and societies are not homogenous and harmonious units, but sites of 'cooperative conflict'. Usually, non-cooperative households can be distinguished from more cooperative households, where men and women make joint decisions. Cooperation in households and societies offers a higher potential for gender-balanced development.



Practical suggestions:

- Assess the status of women and marginal groups within the hierarchical structure of the society.
- Acknowledge that women have power, as the decision-making authority of women within a household, family or social group is often greater than generally assumed. Also, women traditionally often used to have a say in financial matters.
- Assess what factors are preventing women from implementing their preferred strategies.



- Determine whether poor and small families are characterised by greater gender equality or are in greater need of household arrangements that are beneficial to both men and women.
- Especially integrate female-headed households, as poverty and need is often concentrated there.
- Enhance cooperative and reciprocal networks between families.
- Carefully monitor how people perceive a project's impact on the distribution of assets and power within the family. New economic strategies usually involve a higher cash turnover, a fact that might be critical for gender equality.
- In signing contractual agreements with households, make sure that women are a party to the contract.



KEY ISSUE III: Access to and control over natural resources



OBJECTIVE: Ensure long-term tenure rights for stakeholders

Strategic Approach

- ➡ Take a closer look at whether land tenure rights – ownership, access to land, usufruct, etc. – are tuned to people’s needs.
- ➡ Try to adjust tenure rights in order to secure them in the long term. Securing tenure rights for men and women is a major challenge all over the world.
- ➡ Try to close any identifiable gender gaps in the ownership and control of property, as such gaps are one of the causes of women’s low and decreasing economic and social status.

Crucial questions for investigation and practical suggestions

III/1 How can the project enhance local legal systems in order to support access to land and land titles for both men and women?

Special attention must be given to economically disadvantaged people’s quest for better access to, and control over natural resources. It is possible to achieve gender-responsive tenure both in traditional and in modern systems by securing individual or collective rights. Formulating a strategy at the local level requires insight into complex tenure systems, some of which complement, overlap and modify each other.



Practical suggestions:

- Investigate the systems of rights related to natural resources (traditional rules, customary rights, ‘modern’ national rights) that are applied in a particular region.



- Identify inconsistencies between different systems of rights with regard to gender issues, especially where national rights interfere with traditional rights.
- Make it known whether national rights – such as succession and inheritance rights, the right to education and the right to self-determination – support women’s interests, and show women how to claim such rights.
- Support systems that make registration of land titles possible for all. In the past, changes in land tenure have often intensified social stratification along class and gender lines.
- Strive to promote equitable legal rights to property for all family members. Where land is entitled exclusively to men as household heads, women’s traditional rights are undermined.
- Support solutions where the community assigns land to people for usufruct, allowing the community to retain the right of redistribution.
- Support the conversion of informal rights of commons and marginal areas into legal systems defined and controlled by the community.

III/2 How can the project detect whether access to land is ruled by inequitable conditions?

Where land is primarily in the hands of local elites, other parties – such as dependent groups, women, newcomers or pastoralists – usually have few opportunities to gain access to land. Often, this implies that such groups lose their social status and economic means of existence, have to look for off-farm options or emigrate. Unbalanced access to land hinders sustainable land management and must be identified, as it endangers sustainability in the long-term.



Practical suggestions:

- Determine who (what sex and what age) migrates, who stays behind and why.
- Assess what type of land is overused, underused or neglected.
- Focus on hidden or obvious unemployment.
- For each stakeholder group, find the link between limited access to land and impoverishment.
- Assess the situation of young families, as their future may be jeopardized if they do not gain access to sufficient land resources. Lack of access to land increases the pressure on women in particular.
- Determine whether land is concentrated in the hands of elders who might not wish to adapt to changing circumstances, and retain land to secure their dominant position.
- Investigate changes in traditional regulations and forms of exchange between neighbouring groups with different economic strategies (e.g. pastoralists and farmers).



III/3 What kind of land has traditionally been controlled by women and how can the project support them there?

Although men usually control the land cultivated by the family, women sometimes possess and control their own plots and have customary land use rights. Homestead gardens, usually managed by women, have increasingly been given special attention by development organisations, as these gardens frequently enable intensive and diversified production, thus enhancing the food security of households.



Practical suggestions:

- Support women in their efforts to gain land tenure from lineage heads and husbands by making men aware of women's customary rights and the value of their labour.
- Strengthen women's customary rights on communal and open land.
- Ensure that soil conservation projects do not diminish women's access to landscape niches without providing alternatives.
- Emphasise the link between homestead gardens and the food security of households, and make it a starting point for the development of new, balanced household arrangements.
- Investigate production systems and strategies in homestead gardens.
- Support joint implementation and experimentation processes on plots with diversified production.
- Support a dual strategy on women's plots, by enhancing cash crop production while ensuring that food security strategies are maintained.
- Ensure that women's control over plots is not taken over by men when project activities generate new cash income.

III/4 How can the project improve women's small-scale trading of agricultural products and their off-farm employment?

The tangible economic contribution of women to the household is a key determinant of their status in both the household and the community. Their involvement in the cash economy also directly benefits their families. Strengthening their off-farm income and their position as small-scale traders of agricultural products is a key strategy in supporting women.



Practical suggestions:

- Conduct joint assessments of local markets and market strategies with women as well as with mixed groups.
- Investigate the extent to which women already have the responsibility of marketing agricultural products, and raising and marketing small cattle and poultry; assess the scope of business dependent upon these activities.



- Investigate local and regional markets with regard to supply, demand and consumption.
- Choose a regional focus to best support women's involvement in market activities.
- Try to bridge the gap between supply and demand, for example by alleviating shortages through better food storage and regional exchange systems.
- Consider factors that may distort market conditions, for example importing of subsidised grain and staple foods.
- Facilitate women's access to credit by supporting women's groups and revolving funds, or by providing micro-credits.
- Ensure that women's integration into a cash economy enhances rather than weakens their food security strategies.



KEY ISSUE IV: Conflicting and common interests in land use



OBJECTIVE: Transform conflict over
resources into potential

Strategic Approach

- ➡ Take a closer look at the extent to which resources can fulfil their functions and allow men and women to engage in sound livelihood strategies.
- ➡ Promote public discourse on common and competing interests in the use of natural resources, on short-term benefits and long-term threats, and on emerging conflicts.
- ➡ Support the institutionalisation of a dialogue through which men’s and women’s dependency on natural resources will be taken into account.

Crucial questions for investigation and practical suggestions

IV/1 How can the project make people aware of the impact of resource degradation processes in the short and long term?

Where resources become scarce (population growth, inequitable distribution and degradation), the vicious circle of environmental stress and social conflicts is exacerbated. People are often not aware of the complexity of dependencies on resources; nor do they understand that rapid socio-economic change is a long-term threat to resources, resource users and society. Raising awareness of all stakeholders’ dependencies on natural resources is therefore a major challenge.



Practical suggestions:

- Assess how stakeholders perceive environmental degradation processes and their impact on family and society.
- Investigate the different functions that resources have to fulfil for different resource users.



- Identify how resource depletion can result from too many or opposing functions being attributed to these resources.
- Make a systematic inventory of the local resource situation with regard to availability and condition of resources, and challenges to be met, then visualise the inventory by means of sketches and maps.
- Identify major links between social factors and natural resource degradation from different points of view.
- Clarify how resource degradation affects different stakeholders, in particular women.
- Focus on constraints that women face in performing their productive and reproductive roles.
- Investigate indigenous measures and forms of investment for enhancing land stewardship.

IV/2 How can the project support a common search for alternative modes of production or sources of income?

Conflicts over natural resources often result from a lack of alternative economic strategies. Under conditions of poverty, short-term survival strategies take precedence over preservation of natural resources and investment in conservation measures. Marginal lands and commons – which are especially important for women’s food security strategies – are at risk. Thus a common search for substitution of resources, alternative modes of production and new sources of income is necessary.



Practical suggestions:

- Identify what interests regarding stewardship of resources are shared by stakeholders.
- Investigate how stakeholders of both sexes assess the impacts of their land use strategies on resources and the constraints on sustainable land use.
- Collect and discuss solutions and alternatives considered by stakeholders of both sexes.
- Support exchange between local land users on aspects of resource degradation and indigenous conservation measures.
- Support a public debate on the status of communal lands and marginal areas.
- Focus on alternatives that provide immediate economic benefit and directly or indirectly reduce pressure on particularly endangered resources.
- Make sure that alternatives are considered viable by all stakeholders, so that they do not merely conceal existing conflicts or create new inequalities.
- Discuss the benefits of diversification of on- and off-farm strategies for household economies (especially the aspect of reduced vulnerability).
- Balance the need for diversified household production with the possible need for specialisation to generate additional income.



IV/3 How can the project support the effectiveness of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and institutions?

Traditional intra- and inter-societal mechanisms for managing natural resources and handling conflicts over resources have always existed. Their aim is to sustain families' food security strategies and the livelihood of all members of a community. As conflicts over scarce resources are increasing today, such traditional mechanisms have become more significant; but they may have gone unnoticed, or they may not be adapted to current needs. Their long-term potential as tools for natural resource management must be carefully assessed, and they can then be revitalised for gender-balanced development.



Practical suggestions:

- Assess the roles of traditional leaders, churches or institutions in conflict resolution.
- Assess to what extent people perceive existing mutual agreements, reciprocal work groups or exchange systems as balanced, and investigate who is responsible for such traditional support systems.
- Revitalise the traditional conflict-reducing mechanisms and symbiotic relationships that gradually became institutionalised between stakeholders within a society or between neighbouring groups.
- Encourage traditional systems of communal use or communal distribution and redistribution of land.
- Facilitate discussions between young and old, as this can make it easier for elders to understand the link between development trends, common interests in land resources, and the need to give control over land to the young.
- Look into existing myths, tales and other oral traditions, as these often contain visions of environmental, social and gender balance.
- Ensure that control of natural resources is decentralised enough to allow traditional conflict mechanisms to work (defining rules and regulations and their enforcement).

IV/4 How can the project ensure that women and marginal groups take part in processes and institutions that promote management of conflict over resources?

Traditional mechanisms to manage conflicts over natural resources are often male-dominated or elite-oriented. Changes should be encouraged so that these mechanisms acknowledge the interests of all stakeholders. In addition, new institutions might be needed. In either case, conflict resolution mechanisms and institutions must be binding at all levels of society.



Practical suggestions:

- Refrain from directly addressing conflicts over resources, as these reflect the hierarchical structure between stakeholders and are a very sensitive subject in any society.
- Invest in awareness creation and promotion of learning processes through careful participatory analyses of the resource situation and its long-term consequences for all stakeholders.
- Facilitate the creation of new local and regional platforms that bring together male and female land users with decision-makers at all levels.
- Develop plans and institutions to deal with conflict resolution in processes that integrate all stakeholders.
- Conduct joint workshops on issues related to NRM, but also work specifically with women’s groups, youth groups and groups of dependent people.
- Ensure the responsibility, final decision-making power and transparency of new institutions to gain social and political acceptability.
- Monitor the impact of conflict management programmes on women.
- Set an example of a sensitive transformation of all-male institutional structures by mainstreaming gender in the implementing organisation itself.

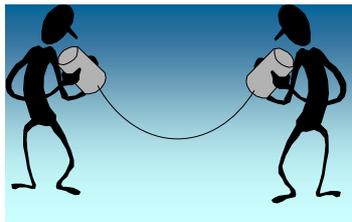


India (2001): In the course of an Autodidactic Learning for Sustainability (ALS) workshop, extension workers, farmers and a local NGO, SAMPARK, participate in a session on management of conflicts over natural resources. The ALS approach was developed by the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE, University of Berne).

(By F. Bachmann)



KEY ISSUE V: Knowledge and skills



OBJECTIVE: Strengthen and combine existing knowledge systems and communication networks

Strategic Approach

- ➡ Take a closer look at whether existing knowledge and information systems are adjusted to current ecological and social requirements.
- ➡ Combine knowledge systems and optimise knowledge sharing through old and new information channels, as this will enable participatory negotiation, experimentation, and creative learning processes aiming at sustainability.
- ➡ Share knowledge about the impact of the prevailing macroeconomic framework on the local situation with higher level decision-makers and discuss recommendations with them.

Crucial questions for investigation and practical suggestions

V/1 How can the project assess the quality of gender-specific knowledge and information systems?

In every society different knowledge systems exist side by side – often without interfering. Knowledge of resource use and household economy is usually transferred along gender lines, with women and men making use of different formal and informal communication networks. Knowledge systems may also differ between social groups and strata. In order to create a pool of relevant knowledge it is important for projects to classify and assess such knowledge systems and their social context.



Practical suggestions:

- Analyse how information flows from one individual to the other, how individuals learn and how they enhance their knowledge within their respective social and economic spheres.
- Differentiate between informal and formal ways of learning typically used by, or open to women and men.
- Investigate what formal and informal groups and institutions each sex uses to generate, cultivate and transfer knowledge and skills.



- Investigate what knowledge systems connected to natural resource use are in the hands of specialists (healers, traditional leaders, etc.).
- Analyse mutual agreements, working groups and exchange systems that are organised along gender lines.
- Assess men's and women's perceptions of the efficiency of their respective knowledge systems.
- Assess people's perceptions of the interference or complementarity between gender-differentiated knowledge systems.
- Investigate gender preferences in using resource persons in official bodies (GOs, NGOs, schools, etc.).
- Analyse cultural and religious barriers and taboos that prevent girls, women or disadvantaged social groups from obtaining access to new knowledge and skills.

V/2 What knowledge exists in the community concerning the impact of land management techniques?

Local people are experts on land issues, especially in their agricultural sphere. At the local level, traditional SLM knowledge, skills and techniques are available, and experience with modern knowledge and techniques may be accessible. Usually, some knowledge of environmental impacts is also available. Even people who use resources too heavily and deplete them because poverty prevents them from applying long-term strategies, are usually quite aware of the consequences; but they often cannot see, or do not have access to, other options.



Practical suggestions:

- Investigate historical processes that led to current land use systems and distinguish between indigenous techniques, adoption processes and adaptation processes.
- Assess how men and women perceive the impact of existing land use systems and available techniques on natural assets.
- Investigate whether and why gender or social classes use traditional and modern techniques differently.
- Investigate whether traditional and indigenous knowledge systems become ineffective or even destructive.
- Assess to what extent women and the poor are reached by external support, and to what extent they actively seek external support.
- Find a way to inform women and the poor about technical aspects of the resource use system to meet the requirements of sustainable land management. For example, cultural and religious barriers may prevent male extensionists from having close contact with women.
- Accompany men, women and children on their daily routines, as this enhances exchange of information.



- Acknowledge and encourage the experimentation and adaptive strategies used by individuals (both men and women) to overcome limitations in their agricultural sphere.

V/3 How can gender-specific information channels be linked to promote mutual dialogue and learning processes?

Exchange of knowledge between gender-specific information channels must be promoted. Where traditional institutions do not guarantee integration and equal access to information for all stakeholders, platforms for dialogue must be created where gender-specific knowledge systems can be discussed and linked.



Practical suggestions:

- Use social gatherings where men and women meet formally and informally for exchanges on gender and environmental issues (local markets, festivals, etc.).
- Use and adapt those popular and modern means of communication that work best (oral history, ceremonies connected to agriculture, songs and dances, theatres, radio, video, etc.).
- Work with formal and informal leaders that are contacted and trusted by both sexes.
- Work with mixed groups (village meetings, training situations, youth groups, etc.) in order to promote environmental education and the transformation of relations between boys and girls, young and old.
- Work with schools on gender and environmental issues, as they provide opportunities to shape perception of social stratification and gender relations, while maintaining the necessary sensitivity to cultural needs.
- Support integration of local knowledge drawn from the immediate physical and social environment into the curriculum of higher education (in partnership with families and communities).
- Make sure that information provided is also fed back into family and society.
- Promote networking among women from different social strata and geographic regions in workshops, and support working groups on gender and environmental issues.
- Identify training needs in collaboration with local people – as training must correspond to actual needs and feasibility.



V/4 How can the project support improved sharing of knowledge between all levels (vertical and horizontal)?

External support aims to develop concerted measures and frameworks at all organisational levels in order to create an 'enabling' socio-political environment that allows for and promotes sustainable land use at the local level. As only little is known about the interrelation between levels and the impact of higher level measures on a specific local context, projects are committed to making knowledge available and integrating it into higher decision-making bodies and processes. This also offers rural populations a real chance to join the political debate on sustainable use of natural resources.



Practical suggestions:

- Support vertical exchange of information (e.g. between farmers and policy-making circles), as well as horizontal exchange (e.g. between neighbours and farmers from different regions, or South-South).
- Reinforce local specialists' awareness of their key role as transmitters of information on local problems, needs and problem-solving approaches, and entrust them to play this role as well as help find the appropriate channels of communication.
- Enhance bottom-up knowledge-sharing on major political, social and economic factors that influence sustainable land management and the situation of women at the local level.
- Formulate your project's experience as a case study and make it available to institutions working on gender and land management (data banks, Internet, research centres, etc.).
- Share information on the extent to which economic instruments (credits, subsidies, 'fair trade', labels, etc.) increase the status of local rural people's economic activities.
- Offer support to NGOs dedicated to gender-balanced development.
- Support knowledge management that strengthens capacities, as well as networking among existing institutions concerned with data collection, storage and dissemination.
- Integrate environment and gender as cross-cutting issues in Terms of Reference (ToRs) for collaborators involved in courses, workshops, and other forms of formal and informal education.



MODULE 3

Gender Issues in SLM: Conceptual Background

Overview

INTRODUCTION: Local context, external influences and support



- ☞ Land use systems, socio-economic context and globalisation
- ☞ Gender issues in relation to external influences and support
- ☞ Specific negative aspects of external influences and support on women's lives and roles in sustainable land management

KEY ISSUE I: Division of labour and responsibility



- ☞ The starting point: 'Social' and 'gender' divisions of labour
- ☞ The gender division of labour in land management
- ☞ Specific aspects of women's economic sphere: High economic burden and time constraints, lack of resources, genuine interest in sustainable land management

KEY ISSUE II: Local stakeholders and decision-making processes



- ☞ All stakeholders have a 'stake' in society
- ☞ Men and women as stakeholders in land management
- ☞ Specific aspects of women as stakeholders: High economic responsibility without sufficient access to assets and decision-making power

KEY ISSUE III: Access to and control over natural resources



- ☞ Different tenure systems
- ☞ Gender-based differences in tenure rights and development potential
- ☞ Specific aspects of women's tenure rights: Lack of legal access to land and decreasing usufruct rights

KEY ISSUE IV: Conflicting and common interests in land use



- ☞ Functions of resources and relation to conflicts over resources
- ☞ Disparities between men's and women's interests in resources
- ☞ Specific aspects of women's interests in land use: Dependency on, and broad knowledge of the functions of resources, yet lack of a voice in political institutions

KEY ISSUE V: Knowledge and skills



- ☞ Traditional, indigenous, modern, and local knowledge
- ☞ Male and female knowledge systems and information networks
- ☞ Specific aspects of women's knowledge systems: Depletion of women's knowledge systems and lack of access to new knowledge



INTRODUCTION:

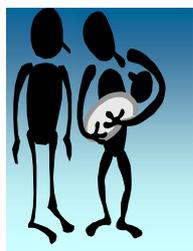
Local context, external influences and support



Land use systems, socio-economic context and globalisation

Land use systems are conditioned to a large degree by the cultural background and the wider economic, political and socio-cultural systems in which the actors are rooted. This context often offers no options for self-regulatory processes at the local level and not enough time for them to take place. It must therefore be modified to create enabling conditions for sustainable land management. This requires processes of negotiation between social partners and giving adequate attention to conditions in local households with regard to resource use, specific capabilities, local knowledge, position in the local hierarchy, availability of labour, age and gender composition, available reserves, social resources, etc.

- The role of development organisations in this process is primarily a supportive one.
- They can be mediators, facilitators and sources of outside experience.
- They should ensure that all stakeholders are equally represented and have a chance to express their concerns and their interests.
- They can foster social negotiation processes by transmitting information, establishing links between stakeholders, and launching discussions at the higher levels.
- They must be accountable down to the communal level.
- Only access to all levels will allow them to play a crucial role in linking activities and information exchange, and to serve as 'advocates' and mediators for the interests of local resource users at the higher levels.



Gender issues in relation to external influences and support

In most cases, the interactions between external factors and individual action in a local context are not straightforward and therefore difficult to assess. For example, economic globalisation, debt relief and structural adjustment programmes can indirectly increase pressure on fragile ecosystems. But they can also bring about diversification, increased income, and ecological marketing. A deeper understanding of interactions between the global and the local is crucial.

In this context, gender analyses emphasise the need for gaining sex and gender disaggregated data. Gender analyses also give important information on the impact of



outside influences on gender issues. For example, they may highlight that while external influences offer a range of new options, in general they destroy social and familial arrangements and tend to promote the particular interests and careers of (male) elites, who by and large have better access to information and economic and political power. So far, a satisfactory counter-balance has not been achieved by development activities in the last few decades. Nor have more recent approaches through national laws and policies (e.g. environmental and agricultural legislation, policy on women and the family, regionalisation and decentralisation, national land laws, heritage laws) induced more equitable processes. As a result, the gap between women's and men's spheres, economic development potential and legal status has widened.



Specific negative aspects of external influences and support on women's lives and roles in sustainable land management

- Women are less visible or do not exist in the accounts of policy-makers.
- Since women's lives straddle the reproductive and productive spheres, they absorb much of the pressure of a degrading environment, of a difficult political framework or of backlashes in development activities.
- Also, women generally benefit less than men from potentially positive impacts of structural adjustment programmes, such as increased food and cash crop production.
- Women bear much of the burden of negative effects, such as increased workloads due to reduced public services (e.g. in the health sector).
- Women are often forced back into 'traditional spheres' of subsistence production and reproduction and exposed to poverty.
- Women's integration into agricultural production increases when they have to take over the work of absent men, be it to support men's cash crop production or to maintain their subsistence production.
- Because of time, energy and money constraints not much is left to invest in sustainable land management.
- Time is also limited for family, child care and social tasks. Women might put even greater pressure on daughters and daughters-in-law to perform household and agricultural tasks, thus increasing the potential for conflict in rural households.
- In many cases young girls have to assume responsibility for the family while mothers work in the fields.



KEY ISSUE I:

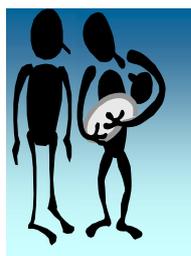
Division of labour and responsibility



The starting point: 'Social' and 'gender' divisions of labour

For their own reproduction, all societies traditionally ascribe different roles to their members. Castes, classes, ethnic groups or socio-economic strata might have specific tasks and occupations, contributing to a more or less formalised social division of labour. This social division of labour is different in every society or culture. In most societies it strongly determines the economic structure of the social strata, especially the differences that characterize richer and poorer groups.

In addition to this social division of labour, every society has a gender division of labour. Men and women have different roles, rights and responsibilities in the reproduction of the society. Some tasks might 'traditionally' be male or female tasks, although both sexes are in a position to perform them. Other tasks might be taboo for one of the sexes. Such a gender division of labour is always a point of negotiation, since everyone has their own perceptions and constraints. Within a community or family the gender division of labour may vary depending on economic status, social relations, family structure, age, availability of time, specific needs or individual capacity. As socio-economic, political and ecological contexts are dynamic, divisions of labour are subject to change. This inherent flexibility should be the focus of any development strategy.



The gender division of labour in land management

The gender division of labour in land management activities leads men and women to follow different economic strategies and use natural resources differently – ideally to achieve the common goal of a secure livelihood for the whole family. In the past, differences between men's and women's specific tasks and responsibilities, economic strategies and interests in resources were often neglected. Today, data on gender roles in agricultural production are generally collected, leading to a considerable re-evaluation of how important it is to understand these differences.

Gender analyses show that the value of women's contributions to agriculture is generally underestimated, although women are increasingly involved in agricultural production. In many cases the women are the true farmers and perform most of the agricultural tasks. Both women and men benefit from increased production, income and mechanisation. While men leave traditional agriculture in favour of cash crop production, off-farm income and migration, women have to take over the work of absent men. In many cases women are the de facto household heads. Their workload in agricultural production has increased in absolute terms, in comparison with men. Current global and local transformations tend to widen the divide between men's and



women's agricultural activities, mostly to the disadvantage of women (men's cash crop economy vs. women's subsistence economy, 'feminisation of poverty,' etc.). Where traditional economic arrangements between men and women are breaking up without being replaced by new, balanced arrangements, individuals, families and communities may suffer.



Specific aspects of women's economic sphere: High economic burden and time constraints, lack of resources, genuine interest in sustainable land management

- Gender analyses emphasise women's high economic burdens, enormous time constraints and lack of resources. Under current conditions it is women who face the most serious problems in fulfilling their duties concerning land use.
- In most areas women's access to land is severely limited or increasingly reduced.
- New agricultural duties taken on by women are often not sufficiently accompanied by an increase in decision-making authority regarding land use.
- Agricultural labour shortages affect women more adversely than men, and they have less power to recruit labour.
- The degradation of natural resources further increases women's bulk of work, with longer working hours, shorter resting periods, greater fragmentation of work, and more recourse to multiple occupations than men.
- Also, women have fewer options to invest in the conservation or rehabilitation of natural resources, as access to and control over land and agricultural inputs are heavily biased in favour of men, access to cash and credits is limited and women's cash earnings are usually spent on family needs.
- Therefore poor and underprivileged women are usually the ones who have a genuine interest in sustainable land management: since they do not have access to alternative economic strategies, they rely heavily on the availability of reliable natural resources.



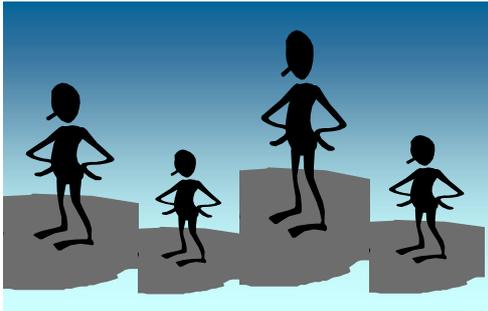
The increasing monetarisation of the subsistence economy in Madagascar weakens the strongly reciprocal traditional forms of cooperation. The main pressure is on single female farmers: in order to pay hired labour for working on their fields, they are forced to take on an increasing number of cash-generating activities. By contrast, male farmers will tend to be entitled to receiving unpaid help from family members. As a result of this gender difference, women's fields often remain uncultivated, their subsistence is endangered and their dependency on cash increases. Economic pressure thus leads to neglecting of natural resource use.

(by U. Gämperli)



KEY ISSUE II:

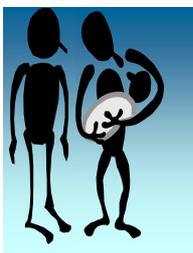
Local stakeholders and decision-making processes



All stakeholders have a 'stake' in society

The traditional division of labour in a society defines the 'stake' that individual members and subgroups have in the society's resources and institutions. In other words: social actors have duties, but to perform them they must be able to have access to the means and rights related to these duties.

The term 'stakeholders' therefore refers to a group of people with similar positions, duties and rights. The current understanding is that local stakeholders must include all those who live in an area and/or who have interests in the area that they need to defend, even if such interests are not accepted by others – as for instance in the case of landless or marginal people who might help to uphold the socio-economic system, yet often have no formal rights or claims. The stakes that marginal groups or women have in natural resources are less visible than the stakes held by more powerful groups, their economic strategies are less acknowledged and their needs less well articulated. Thus development projects easily forget these special interests when they address the needs of communities and families. Moreover, changes in the socio-economic and political context often negatively affect the formal and informal claims of the powerless. The transition to a cash economy poses a particular threat for the fragile complementary arrangements made by marginal groups, women and female-headed households and leads to (increased) poverty among them.



Men and women as stakeholders in land management

As a result of the gender division of labour, men and women do not have the same stakes in natural resources, social institutions and decision-making processes in the household and society. Therefore it may be misleading to set up categories of stakeholders entitled 'village', 'community' or 'household', as is often done for analytical purposes and development activities. Also, 'men' and 'women' are not homogenous groups. In fact, it is inadequate to consider that any social group is a homogenous decision-making unit. Because the individual members of a group never have the same interests, communities and 'households' are sites of 'cooperative conflict': separate groups – men and women, the young and the elderly – are united and/or divided by interests, abilities, decision-making authority and power. When opposed and common interests in resources are taken into consideration, these sites of cooperative conflict provide a potential for change that can be used strategically.



Specific aspects of women as stakeholders: High economic responsibility without sufficient access to assets and decision-making power

Gender analyses highlight that differences in specific economic activities and decision-making authority characterise distinct male and female spheres. They also show that the importance of women’s contributions to the economy („women’s economy“) stands increasingly in a striking contrast to their decision-making power. Such an unbalanced situation leads women to perform their duties less well, as opportunities to optimise production according to family and ecological needs are lacking. Further specific problems are:

- Women usually have to rely on men (husband, father, brother, elder) to have access to wider decision-making processes and institutions outside their specific economic spheres. They thus depend on their male relatives’ goodwill and status.
- Men are often not aware of the specific interests of women or do not acknowledge their importance.
- When new income and consumption opportunities become accessible, men often do not resist the temptation to pursue personal interests to the detriment of women and children in the family economy.
- Women may thus be running the household and supporting themselves, their children and other relatives without any reliable support from a husband or male relative, and without the necessary resources and decision-making power concerning resources.

Strategies must therefore underline that it is in the interest of both men and women to correct the growing imbalances between what must be done and what can be done for the benefit of the whole family.

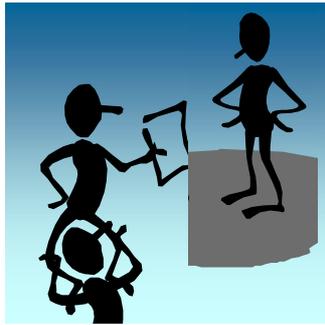


The Multi-Stakeholder Approach



KEY ISSUE III:

Access to and control over natural resources



Different tenure systems

Different tenure systems usually overlap everywhere in the world. Formal and informal rights – whether governmental, private, or communal – complement and modify each other; in many cases they are even contradictory. In traditional societies, access to land usually comes through inheritance rights, marriage rights and informal networks; it often involves a 'bundle of rights', with different persons simultaneously exercising different rights on the same plot of land.

Therefore, access to land means *having land available for personal use but not necessarily as property or with the right to use it in the long term*.

As this has different consequences depending on the type of users, it is necessary to differentiate between:

- ownership rights,
- short- or long-term rights to use land for personal purposes,
- decision-making power over land use and choice of products,
- collective tenure or usufruct rights linked with social rules and regulations.

Worldwide the lack of adequate and secure tenure rights is a major problem for men and women, and land is distributed in a highly inequitable manner. Current socio-economic change and large-scale modifications of agricultural systems make land ownership a major reason why the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' is increasing. Landscape niches vanish and access to land is increasingly limited, to the disadvantage of people depending on such access. Yet security of tenure – whether for individually owned land or communal land – is an important precondition for sustainable land management, as it encourages farmers to develop long-term strategies and to invest in care and maintenance measures.



Gender-based differences in tenure rights and development potential

Gender analyses show a growing discrepancy between the responsibilities, workloads and legal statuses of men and women. On the one hand men are able to secure their tenure rights on their families' productive land and to invest in, as well as profit from an emerging cash

economy. On the other hand intensification, cash crop production and land consolidation might render traditional diversification strategies invalid and tend to avert economic strategies that mainly belong to the sphere of women's economy.

Women depend to a greater degree on access to communal and marginal lands



and on informal usufruct rights that are increasingly under pressure. This is a threat to subsistence-oriented households, poor households and female-headed households with scarce resources.

Furthermore, in rural societies the lack of access to, and control over land is often a major problem for the growing mass of young people who want to establish their own households. Decision-making power concerning a social group's natural resources lies in the hand of elders who traditionally have the responsibility of wisely administering the distribution of resources and the regulation their use. When elders hold back land or family property for too long, conflicts between the generations arise and force young people to look for alternatives outside agriculture. The development potential of communities and families is highest where access to, and control over land or natural resources corresponds to the needs of men and women.



Specific aspects of women's tenure rights: Lack of legal access to land and decreasing usufruct rights

- With regard to tenure rights, women are generally disadvantaged and strongly affected by current changes.
- In traditional rural systems access to resources is regulated largely on the basis of kinship: women usually only have indirect access to land through their relationship to a man (husband, father, etc.).
- In formal 'modern' systems, titles are often only registered as 'family land' under the name of a male family member.
- Sometimes the legal situation may support women in securing tenure rights, yet these women frequently do not know enough about rights and procedures to act in good time.
- In some cases women perceive tenure rights as being important only for men. Women thus depend on the goodwill of men or on equitable household arrangements.
- Women's traditional decision-making power in the economic sphere becomes ineffective when they lose access to natural resources.
- Access to marginal lands and commons is further affected by population pressure and degradation as well as by putting areas under protection (closed areas, parks, etc.).
- Investments in land require labour, access to new knowledge, and financial input – all of which are difficult to obtain for women. Since access to credit frequently requires land as collateral, women are largely excluded from the formal credit market and have to seek alternatives (group formation, revolving funds, etc.).

"In order for women farmers, who are responsible for 60 to 80% of the food production in developing countries, to use land more efficiently and thereby make a greater contribution to food security, they need access to land, management control of land-based resources, and economic incentives that security of tenure provides."

(FAO, 2002)



KEY ISSUE IV:

Conflicting and common interests in land use



Functions of resources and relation to conflicts over resources

Natural resources have to fulfil a variety of socio-cultural, economic and ecological functions. To be sustainable, resource use must ensure that all these functions are maintained in the long term. These functions allow the different stakeholders to perform their duties in accordance with their socio-cultural background, and to develop new strategies under changing circumstances. Depletion of resources often leaves people without any opportunity to adopt alternative livelihood strategies; it also increases conflicts over resources. These conflicts may become chronic, or expand spontaneously and even result in war and genocide.

A main source of conflict over resources today is the **dominant interest of outside parties in the economic value of local resources**. Only one of the productive functions is thus valued, and socio-cultural as well as ecological functions of resources are undermined. What originally started with colonialism is being continued today by forces associated with the global economy, using technical and industrial forms of exploitation. One example is timber harvesting, which restricts the availability of forests for local resource users and promotes competition between their interests in natural resources. In hierarchical societies conflicts over natural resources tend to be solved in favour of elites and/or elders. **Thus conflicts over resources are both the cause and the consequence of disparities in social power and influence.**



Disparities between men's and women's interests in resources

Gender analyses show that in most cases men and women recognise the importance of having a dual approach to market production on the one hand, and subsistence production on the other. But conflicts arise because of the gender division of labour and responsibility: whereas men often prefer to produce for markets and cash (in many cases to avoid having to migrate), women frequently tend to limit market risks to non-food production in order to maintain food security in times of scarcity. In land use systems that strive for a higher integration into a cash economy, market-oriented actors usually dominate and ignore the interests of subsistence-oriented strategies. Therefore balancing market production and subsistence production is a constant source of land use conflict in rural households and societies. Solutions to conflicts therefore lie in constant promotion of dialogue and processes oriented towards optimising the complementarity of multiple household strategies.



Specific aspects of women’s interests in land use:
Dependency on, and broad knowledge of the functions of
resources, yet lack of a voice in political institutions

- To perform their gender-based tasks, women rely to a large degree on a variety of socio-cultural, productive and ecological functions attributed to natural resources, as well as on a broad knowledge of resources.
- Women tend to be the economic losers where the familial or social resource bases are depleted and familial economic arrangements are annulled.
- Women’s broadly spread interests in resources – usually including various productive, socio-cultural as well as ecological functions – are valued less than men’s and their preference for local agricultural practices and subsistence orientation is seen as a sign of backwardness.
- Women bear the brunt of a disproportionately large share of the consequences of failures resulting from a careless promotion of cash crop production, and have limited access to benefits when cash crops succeed.
- Very rarely do political institutions support women, and in most societies, the traditional forms of conflict management are male-dominated and male-oriented.
- Ultimately, all this limits the potential families have of coping with, and recovering from stress and failures.

Thus, it is crucial for men to become women’s allies as well as for women to be given a voice in negotiation processes aiming for win-win solutions.





KEY ISSUE V:

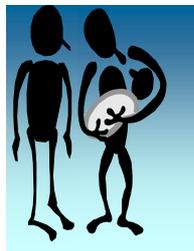
Knowledge and skills



Traditional, indigenous, modern, and local knowledge

Long-standing experience allows local communities to accumulate a wealth of knowledge on how to deal with their ecological and social environment. Knowledge systems devoted to land use usually also integrate mechanisms, institutions and social norms to protect scarce resources. Yet traditional or indigenous knowledge systems frequently become ineffective or even destructive in the face of external forces and changing conditions. Greater pressure on resources and society undermines farmers' self-reliance and competence and destroys regulating mechanisms that make land use sustainable. Without enough time to undergo the necessary experimentation and adjustment, traditional land use techniques and new production techniques might be inappropriate or even destructive when applied in new areas.

In order to slow down or even stop resource degradation, a range of conservation technologies and measures based on modern or 'western' knowledge systems have been provided and introduced. In general, these have not been effective enough (if at all) in mitigating the environmental and social stress that increasingly threatens the local and global resource base. In a world characterized by increasing interference, rapid change and increasing interdependency, there is a growing understanding that sustainable development strategies can only emerge from **a pool of local and external knowledge systems generated by joint and participatory experimentation and adaptation processes.**



Male and female knowledge systems and information networks

The division of labour defines how individuals and groups use natural resources, and how they perceive and experience nature. This creates a bundle of knowledge systems inside a community. Logically, not all members of a community share the same knowledge of the environment. Gender plays a very important role in the process of obtaining and transmitting knowledge in formal and informal networks. Girls traditionally learn from their mothers, female friends and relatives, and boys learn all that is necessary to perform their duties from men. Age is another determining factor for knowledge. Interferences and exchanges occur between knowledge systems; but such systems may also exist side by side without much contact. Under favourable conditions, gendered knowledge systems complement each other, allowing men and women to use resources efficiently according to their social roles and thus to contribute individually to



the household economy. To remain effective, knowledge systems must constantly develop and adapt to changing circumstances.

Gender analyses highlight that a vanishing resource base goes hand in hand with loss of traditional knowledge systems and destruction of the symbiotic relationship between knowledge systems differentiated according to gender and age. This growing gap must be addressed through intense knowledge sharing in order to combine the qualities of long-standing experience, deep insight into the functions of resources and long-term strategies with the qualities of flexibility and willingness to experiment with new options.

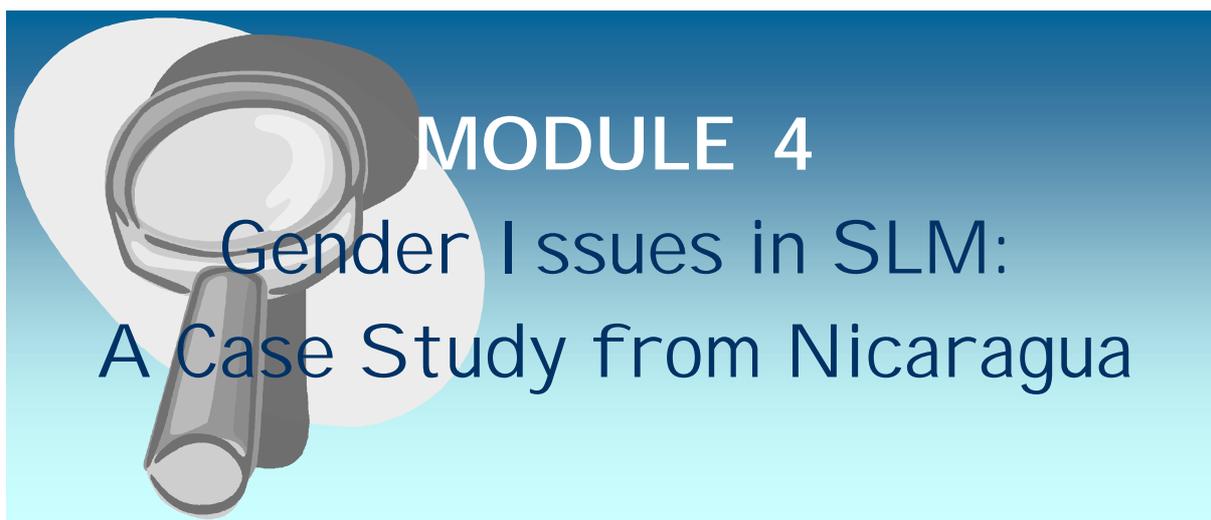


Specific aspects of women's knowledge systems: Depletion of women's knowledge systems and lack of access to new knowledge

- In conflicts between the younger and the older generations, young men in particular may try to use a western orientation and western thinking as a strategy to gain access to resources and decision-making power. Moreover, young men often tend to support large-scale technical soil and water conservation measures. In such cases their coalition with development agents strongly undermines women's orientation towards subsistence production through intensive production systems and diversification of products.
- Whereas women increasingly bear the major burden of agricultural work and take over new tasks, their access to new knowledge and skills is limited. This can lead to situations in which women try to use new techniques but fail to apply them appropriately.
- Household investments in schooling favour boys, as they promise a higher economic benefit in future.
- Worldwide, women have less access to formal education and informal networks than men.
- Women's knowledge has a lower status in a cash-oriented world.
- Women's knowledge systems often do not develop in exchange with men's knowledge systems. This reduces women's development potential and does not allow them to adequately respond to the challenges and options in today's world.
- It is easier for men to access new knowledge and knowledge systems. They control political institutions and decision-making processes; development agents tend to address them first, often ignoring women as potential partners.

"An important part of women's ability to influence the policy environment is the recognition and documentation of their indigenous skills and knowledge in different production areas."

(Joesten L, Fernández B. 2000)



Impact of a Gender Strategy on Sustainable Development

Report by Felicitas Bachmann

Centre for Development and Environment. University of Berne, Switzerland

Foreword: Institutional background of this report

Several types of development actors in Switzerland are members of the "Sustainable Land Use Forum": the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), several NGOs and university institutes. This Forum is sub-divided into several Working Groups on specific themes. The Working Group on "Gender and Sustainable Land Management" commissioned an evaluation of experience gained in implementing a Gender Strategy in Nicaragua. This study was conducted from March to April 2000. The two Nicaraguan agricultural cooperatives that participated in the evaluation are partner organisations of the Swiss NGO 'Swiss Labour Assistance' (SLA).

The assessment of experience was jointly conducted by Fátima Ismael (consultant from Nicaragua), Juana Villareyna (employed by UCA Mirafior) and Felicitas Bachmann (consultant from CDE). It analysed experience gained in the Unión de Cooperativas Agropecuarias Héroes y Mártires de Mirafior (UCA Mirafior), Estelí. The results were presented in a report entitled "Sistematización de la experiencia de la UCA Mirafior: Basado en el análisis del concepto Género y Manejo Sostenible de la Tierra desde su práctica y realidad" (April 2000).

The present paper is based on this joint effort (discussions and reflections that took place within the framework of the evaluation in UCA Mirafior), also taking into account an assessment of project documents. Its results were presented orally by the author within the framework of the "Sustainable Land Management Forum" in Berne on 23 November 2000. The paper discusses the synergies that developed between the Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and the Strategy for Transformation of Gender Roles (Gender Strategy), and how these synergies were used by UCA Mirafior.

At this point I would like to thank all those who contributed to this work in one way or another. My special thanks go to Fátima and Juana for their friendly collaboration, to the farmers of Mirafior for their lively and active participation in discussions, and to the staff and leaders of UCA Mirafior as well as those responsible at SLA offices in Zurich and Managua for their overall support.

March 2001



Miraflor

The Miraflor area lies in Estelí Department, approximately 185 km from Managua. It covers about 105 km² of very hilly country with altitudes varying between 1000-1500 m asl. Two agroecological zones have been identified: the *zona húmeda*, with tropical cloud forest and average annual rainfall up to 2700 mm, and the *zona seca*, with an average annual rainfall of 1000-1500 mm and tropical dry forest.

Before the Sandinista Revolution, the land belonged to a handful of large landowners who practised extensive grazing and had coffee plantations. A large part of the area at higher altitudes was covered with forests.

In the course of the Sandinista agrarian reform, a major part of the land was confiscated and redistributed to former farm hands, landless people and migrants who were organised in agricultural cooperatives and used the land collectively. With massive governmental funds and high input of agrochemicals, seed potatoes and coffee were produced in monocultures. During the war against the Contras in the 1980s, Miraflor was a heavily contested area. As a result, the men were absorbed by military defence of the country while the women did most of the work in the fields or temporarily migrated to the city with their children.

The founding of unions of cooperatives¹ accelerated as of 1989. The new government in 1991 put an end to governmental support for smallholders. Consequently, unions of cooperatives and the initiative of individual cooperatives gained importance.

Today, 4800 people (i.e. 880 households) live in the area of Miraflor in 40 different *comunidades*. Land tenure is still characterised by great disparities.

Distribution of landholdings in Miraflor (2000)

Number of households (HH)	% of HH	Average size of landholdings (mz)*	Total surface (mz)	% of total area
9	1%	900	8100	33%
28	3%	250	7000	28%
841	96%	12	9800	39%

* 1 mz = 0.7 ha

During the Sandinista land reform approximately 14% of the beneficiaries were women. Today the percentage of women who own land is very small, as many of them did not claim their rights when the cooperatives were reorganised and land was redistributed. Moreover, land titles were issued in the names of male family members. Other women had land titles but ceded use of the land to the men. Thus today, both land and agricultural production are in men's hands.

UCA Miraflor, a union of cooperatives, was founded in 1990. More than half of the smallholders in the Miraflor area are members of UCA. In 2000, the union consisted of 13 cooperatives (456 members), of which four were exclusively composed of women (185 women) and the rest were mixed groups. In reality, though, these remaining 9 cooperatives consisted mainly of men.

¹ Union of cooperatives: UCA (Unión de Cooperativas Agropecuarias)



UCA Mirafior is a cooperative that mainly offers services via its programmes in the fields of “Production and Marketing”, “Organisation and Training” and “Conservation of Resources”.

The Strategy for sustainable resource use developed by UCA Mirafior

At the time when UCA Mirafior was founded the cooperatives were confronted with the problem that potato monocultures and severe deforestation in the 1980s had caused erosion and loss of soil fertility, and also reduced the availability of water. Conservation of resources was thus a priority for UCA from the beginning. With a view to elaborating a development plan for Mirafior, UCA initiated a participatory process during which all cooperatives conducted workshops that led to the formulation of *sueños dorados*. On the one hand, these visions and dreams constituted the foundation for a general land use plan; on the other, they became the basis on which resource use plans were developed for individual farms (*planificación por finca*). These plans are devised for ten-year periods and include measures for the diversification of production, conservation of resources (soil, springs, forest), reforestation, fodder growing for intensive livestock management, etc. A socio-economic survey and a study of current and potential land uses were further important elements for planning development in Mirafior. The participatory process initiated by UCA Mirafior led to a change in perception: changes in land use were now perceived as a necessary objective requiring collective action. This made it possible for farmers to move from production systems based on monocultures, high input of chemical fertilisers and plant protection products to systems characterised by diversification and intensification; farmers also increasingly opted for organic farming (vegetables and coffee) and intensive livestock management.



UCA Mirafior's Strategy for Sustainable Development has led to greater integration among the people in the area.

(by F. Bachmann)

After these steps, a Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Mirafior area was formulated. It contained ecological, economic and social components that have been implemented since 1994 within the framework of an EU project.

On the initiative of the population, Mirafior was declared a protected area (*area protegida*) that achieved legal status in 1996. The protected area is known and its importance acknowledged beyond the borders of the region. It has also led to greater integration among the population of Mirafior, increasing the community's sense of identity.



In all areas of agricultural production, UCA works via committees that consist of members from all cooperatives. The *Committee on Natural Resources* has existed since UCA was founded and is the largest of these committees, consisting of members from all cooperatives. In contrast to the other committees, it is open to representatives of the *comunidades* and youth organisations. Its integrating effect on the population makes it especially significant: practically everyone living in the Miraflor area is represented on this committee, the impact of which thus extends beyond the cooperatives. The committee is also very important because of its central functions as a controlling body ensuring proper adherence to the regulations for resource conservation, as a consulting body for loans, as a mediator in the case of conflicts over resources, as an advisory body for schools that want to integrate environmental themes in their curricula, as the coordinator of collaboration with other organisations and with ministries, and as an organiser of resource conservation and waste disposal campaigns in the cooperatives.

“The problem is not that women have different roles but the lower value given to these roles as compared to those of men.”

(Uma Ramaswamy et al. 1999.)

UCA Miraflor’s Strategy for Sustainable Use of Resources has convinced smallholders to take up a very intensive and diversified form of production, with a high percentage of organic production of coffee and vegetables and use of integrated plant management (IPM), as well as intensive livestock management. With the help of reforestation, soil conservation and the use of organic fertilisers, the degradation of resources was stopped and the general environmental situation was improved. The environmental awareness of children, young people and adults has generally increased and involvement in environmental conservation is intense.

UCA Miraflor’s Gender Strategy

UCA Miraflor’s leaders started addressing the issue of gender in 1990.

From then on, increasing attention was paid to the following problems in UCA’s conceptual and practical work:



GENDER-BASED INEQUALITY of conditions and opportunities for women to access resources and education;



DISCRIMINATION in traditional role models and division of labour; as a consequence, the value of women’s labour is hardly acknowledged, although women participate in production. Women are perceived as housewives and excluded from decision-making processes;



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, a high percentage of single mothers and female-headed households, lack of organisational capacity among women.



As of 1995, these aspects were increasingly taken into account under the influence of the new gender policy of Swiss Labour Assistance (SLA), which supports UCA financially. An ongoing internal training process was initiated in the field of gender, resulting in conceptual and practical changes in UCA's working procedures.

In a participatory process involving the women belonging to the cooperatives, their practical and strategic needs were identified. On the basis of this study, UCA Miraflores formulated its Gender Strategy, which integrates the theme of gender cross-sectorally in UCA's activities. With the help of this Gender Strategy, UCA Miraflores aims to promote the participation of women in all parts of the Miraflores project.

The main objectives of the strategy are:

- ➡ TO REFLECT on the condition of women and men and their gender roles.
- ➡ TO DEVELOP mechanisms by which the position of women in the family can be strengthened, and enable participation of women on equal terms in all areas of activity.
- ➡ TO STRENGTHEN women's capacity to participate in organisation in order to enable them to defend their interests.



The population of Miraflores are determined to improve understanding and communication between women and men, a process that the Swiss Labour Assistance (SLA) has been supporting since 1995.

(by F. Bachmann)



Reflection on gender issues became a central element in working with the cooperatives as of 1996. The methodological approach is based on a participatory process involving reflection – action – reflection. Communication plays a central role as an educational and strategic process. In the course of dialogue, social inequality is made visible and information is fed into the process of change to be promoted, offering guidelines for attitudinal and behavioural changes that are needed to improve relationships between men and women as well as the use of natural resources.

The implementation of the Gender Strategy focuses on:



INSTITUTIONALISING a gender-sensitive approach: strategic planning takes gender issues into account. Both UCA's technical and administrative and its *Junta Directiva* (executive) receive continuous training in gender-related questions. This internal process is fundamentally important because experience shows that resistance to change must also be overcome by technical personnel. The gender division coordinates its activities with the other divisions. Close collaboration exists in particular with respect to training because a methodology to integrate gender aspects in all forms of training was developed as a joint venture.



ENCOURAGING processes of reflection: cooperatives, families and schools are encouraged to reflect on the significance of equal rights and the need for participation and integration of all sectors of the population in negotiations regarding future development processes. Raising awareness of the inequalities between women and men with respect to division of labour and workloads is an important objective of training. It is introduced within the framework of technical training and counselling. This part of the strategy serves two purposes: making the labour and achievements of women (and children) visible, and helping the members of a household to develop an awareness of how important it is for all of them to participate in decision-making processes that concern household matters.



INTEGRATING women in the cooperatives and decision-making bodies: four women's cooperatives have been founded since 1996. By becoming active members of elected bodies in cooperatives, committees or UCA Miraflor, women can participate in decision-making at the respective level. According to the women themselves, increasing their involvement in organisation is the main prerequisite for improving their position within the family and society. As members of the cooperative they have access to further UCA services such as loans and training. However, heavy workloads, low self-confidence and sometimes a lack of knowledge about some aspects of agricultural production often make it difficult for women to be active members of committees and other bodies. Nevertheless, it was possible to significantly improve the integration of women in decision-making bodies.



Participation of women in UCA Mirafior’s decision-making bodies (2000)

	Men	%	Women	%	Total
<i>Asamblea de Representantes</i> (legislative)*	45	69%	20	31%	65
<i>Junta Directiva</i> (executive)*	9	69%	4	31%	13
Committees: <i>total</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>55%</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>150</i>
Natural resources	25	63%	15	37%	40
Livestock management	12	40%	18	60%	30
Coffee	20	67%	10	33%	30
Vegetables	16	53%	14	47%	30
Social matters	10	50%	10	50%	20
Loans committee	4	100%	0	0%	4
Total of all bodies		64%		36%	

*equal representation of all cooperatives



TRAINING: training is offered in the form of workshops, exchange of experience, discussions and assistance for women’s projects. The range of courses covers the following fields: literacy programmes with a gender focus, discussion of gender issues, agricultural production, organisation and administration of cooperatives, reproductive health and family planning, etc. Courses are usually conducted in mixed groups so that communication and exchange of knowledge between men and women can be promoted. Courses designed specifically for women aim to boost self-confidence, discuss the rights of women, build leadership capacity, help formulate projects, etc. The aim of such training is to increase the number of women who are capable of and willing to join committees and other bodies.



IMPROVING women’s access to resources: access to land is generally limited. Although a market for land exists, women lack economic resources. A pilot project made funds available in rotation to a women’s group, allowing them to buy land. As members of cooperatives, women have access to loans. This enables them to have their own income and increase their autonomy, thus also improving their social position.



WORKING with young people and children: support also exists for the local youth organisation, which is strongly involved in raising awareness of gender and environmental problems. UCA collaborates closely with teachers of primary schools in order to further develop existing curricula and ensure that gender and environmental education are included.



The three pillars for empowerment of women are:

ORGANISATION



TRAINING



LOANS



In the four years during which the Gender Strategy has been applied, gradual changes in relationships within households have already been observed, though great differences still exist between households. Domestic violence is now less acute. Women have become very aware of the need for conservation of resources, thanks to training, participation in committee work and increased integration in decision-making related to agricultural production.

The creation of women's cooperatives has been a decisive step in developing women's self-confidence and strengthening their position (and capacity to negotiate) in the family and society. Women feel integrated and experience greater recognition from men. Communication and cooperation within families has improved, which has also led to an increase in mutual trust and respect. Decisions about production or financial questions are now more often reached jointly.

The division of labour remains a very problematical issue. Because of their involvement in the cooperatives and their increased participation in production, women have much heavier workloads. In spite of this they usually remain solely responsible for reproductive work, with participation by men still very marginal in most cases. However, the younger generation have made some progress in this respect.

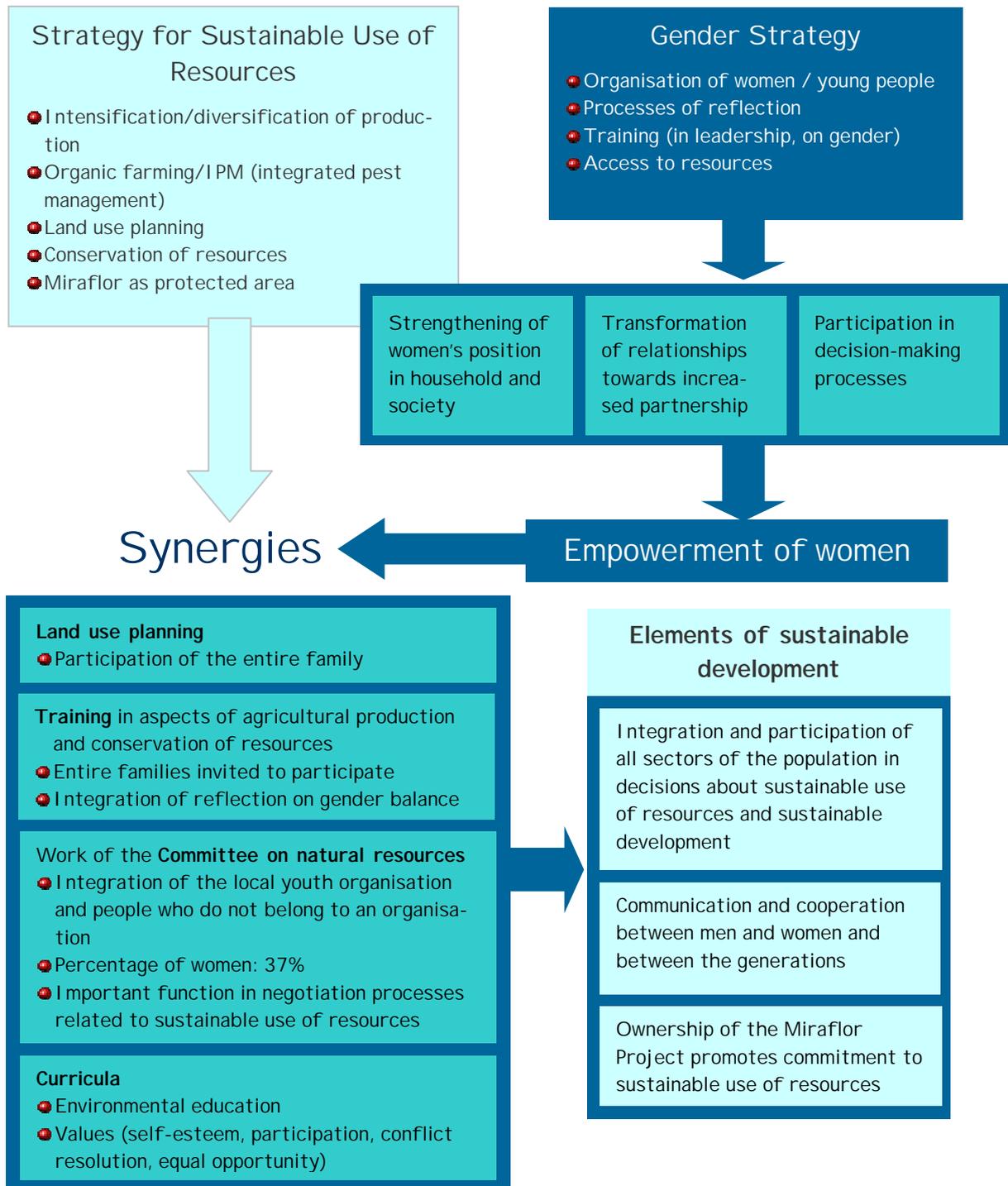
Synergies between the Gender Strategy and the Strategy for Sustainable Use of Resources

It is difficult to grasp how and where gender problems interact with problems related to sustainable use of resources in reality. This was repeatedly observed in discussions during which experiences were evaluated. But such interactions do exist in the form of synergies that emerged between UCA's Gender Strategy and its Strategy for Sustainable Use of Resources; these synergies were taken advantage of in the course of the programme.

The example of UCA Miraflor presented in this paper shows how activities aiming to promote gender balance and strategies to encourage sustainable use of resources can complement each other.



Synergies between UCA Mirafior's Strategies for Sustainable Use of Resources and its Gender Strategy





The synergies can be illustrated by the following examples:



“Planificación por finca”: To apply for a loan, members must design a land use plan that integrates measures for conservation of resources (soil conservation, reforestation, fodder production, etc.). UCA requires of its members that everyone in the household be involved in planning activities, in order to take into account as many interests and needs as possible and integrate the knowledge and experience of all household members in decision-making.



Training in aspects of agricultural production: All members of a family are invited to participate in training activities. Thus, women and young people can increase their knowledge and competence in land use matters and garner experience. Courses are also always used to reflect on gender issues.



Committee on natural resources: This committee is a central body for communication, coordination and evaluation in the field of sustainable use and conservation of resources. In 1999, 37% of committee members were women. Moreover, delegates of the youth organisation and representatives of those people who are not members of a cooperative also belong to this committee, which thus has an impact on a far higher percentage of the population than UCA and plays an important role in negotiations on all resource-related issues.



School curricula: At all educational levels, school curricula are adapted in order to increase the importance of environmental education and of values such as self-esteem, participation, peaceful conflict resolution and relationships between men and women based on equal rights.





These elements and measures are complementary. Their aim is to achieve a strategy for sustainable use of resources and sustainable development by integrating all sectors of the population in negotiation and decision-making processes.

Conclusion

To conclude, the following aspects can be regarded as contributions of a gender strategy to sustainable use of resources:

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From the author's perspective, one cannot argue that a gender strategy will have an immediate impact on the sustainability of resource use. In particular, in a situation where women own very little land and their independent agricultural activities are limited to the use of small surfaces close to the house and handed over by men – as is the case in Mirafior – a gender strategy will have no immediate influence on the sustainability of land use.



Through their local celebration of International Women's Day, the people of Mirafior highlight their efforts to work towards a future characterized by solidarity.

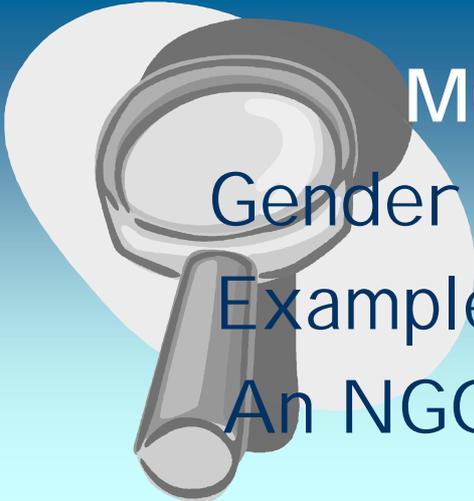
(by F. Bachmann)

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When considering the objectives of sustainable development, strategies for sustainable use of resources have the same importance as strategies aiming to achieve equal participation of men and women in development activities. The example of UCA Mirafior shows that **synergies** can be generated and promoted between a gender strategy and a strategy for sustainable use of resources.



3.  A gender strategy can substantially contribute to the development of households into **cooperative units** in which greater cooperation between men, women and the different generations can thrive. In the case of UCA Miraflor, this has meant that decisions regarding land use planning are now being taken together, thus allowing the interests, knowledge, creativity and experience of men, women and children to be integrated. Such cooperation makes better use of a family's internal resources. But it also implies that appropriate mechanisms (e.g. stipulating that a land use plan must be a prerequisite for a loan) either already exist or are being developed.
4.  If decisions are taken together and responsibility is shared, chances are greater that land use and resource conservation measures will be implemented efficiently, as they are supported by a broader constituency. A gender strategy can contribute in a decisive way to the **integration of the entire population** in social learning and negotiation processes, as experience in Miraflor has shown. This is highly significant for sustainable use of resources.
5.  The increasing integration and participation of women in production and organisation processes also has its drawbacks: women's workloads become even heavier than they already are. Reproductive labour is still mainly the responsibility of women. On the one hand this can lead to excessive stress for women, on the other it may stifle women's motivation and willingness to actively participate in processes of organisation. Therefore, **organisational and technical measures** are urgently needed to reduce the workload of women, for example in the field of water supply.



MODULE 5

Gender Issues in SLM: Examples from India – An NGO's Perspective

Report from V Prameela
SAMPARK, Bangalore, India.

Overview of Examples

-  1 A man uses bribes to harvest wood in a protected forest
-  2 A farm family tries to diversify its agricultural activities
-  3 Small, medium, and large landowners in Koppal
 - o *A small-scale farmer with 1 acre of land*
 - o *A medium-scale farmer with 14 acres of land*
 - o *A large-scale farmer with 98 acres of land*
-  4 A family dedicated to stone cutting
-  5 A tool to change attitudes: "Leadership Imaging"
-  6 Case study of watershed management by SAMUHA
-  7 Case study of Parivarthana's vermicomposting project



1 A man uses bribes to harvest wood in a protected forest

Background

In Ranchi, a woman took a loan from her Self-Help Group, of which she was the leader, and gave it to her husband. He used the money to illegally fell trees in a nearby forest.

He was caught and jailed. To get him out of jail, the woman had to fight a case, and again the Self-Help Group gave her a loan for the expenses. When he came out, the couple decided not to engage in illegal activities anymore. However, the forest guard and the police confronted the husband and urged him to continue his activities, as by now he had 'invested' so much in his business! Thus the husband is now cutting logs again in the forest; this time he is bribing the forest guard and the police, who encouraged him to do so according to a widespread system. The women's Self-Help Group either does not realise, or does not question the illegal and unethical use of the money it provided to support this couple.

Analysis



In the current case, the wife is in debt, but she has not used the money from her loan herself. Moreover, she has no direct way of ensuring that the loan she has taken will generate the income she needs in order to repay her debt. Her decisions in this case have left her with no control over her debt: had she bought a few goats with the money available, at least she would have had an opportunity to repay her loan in a way that was under her control, and receive tangible assets from her investment. By putting money into the hands of her husband, she has undermined her own empowerment.



What choices do women have in the context of corruption?

Corruption in this case mostly involves men – the forest guard, the police, the husband: those stealing the wood are all men – and the woman, by supporting her husband, indirectly supports the corrupt system. The woman seems to be more or less passive in this case, but would she have been as passive if she had been given sufficient information and counselling?



What role did the NGO play in this case?



In this case, we have to analyse the role of the NGO. The staff of the NGO did not even know that the group's money was being used in this manner. Upon learning of the corruption after the fact, they found themselves in a quandary. In the majority of cases, NGOs hesitate to play an activist role and to expose the government, as they want to have access to schemes for the poor for the benefit of their clients. They cannot annoy the same people they seek benefits from, and this makes for unequal partnerships. It is the same with the women: they do not want to oppose the government for that very reason, because they seek benefits from the government's different schemes.

Lessons learned

In terms of learning, cases of success are as important as cases of failure, and certainly instances of inaction are just as important for gleaning lessons. In this case, the NGO failed to properly monitor the credit given to the Self-Help Group, assuming that the women would make wise decisions regarding investment of their savings. Had the NGO learned earlier about the situation of the couple and entered into a dialogue with the Self-Help Group, collectively they might have been able to elaborate more choices with the woman and ways for the group to spend its money more appropriately.



We see that the NGO failed to pursue the following important activities:

- Tracking usage of the Self-Help Group's loans.
- Ensuring that women, not men, benefit from the loans given.
- Supporting a woman by providing alternative options and counselling (given a choice, the woman might have taken an alternative and better-informed decision)
- Ensuring that the wife was aware of the consequences of her decision – i.e. that she would enter into a self-propagating chain of events that would need continued financial inputs from her towards unethical activities with little or no control in her hands.

The gender approach in this case highlights that it is vital that NGOs...

-  ... do not assume that savings in the hands of women will go towards non-exploitative and women-empowering ends,
-  ... take firm policy stands,
-  ... ensure timely follow up,
-  ... initiate discussions on values, and
-  ... bring out conflicts over economic constraints and Natural Resource Management.

A proactive stance by the NGO in this case might have avoided much of what followed.



2 A farm family tries to diversify its agricultural activities

Background

The family

Parvathamma is a member of a Self-Help Group formed by Sampark and called Akkamaha Devi Sangha. She and her husband have eight children, of which three daughters have married and moved out, one daughter is helping her mother at home, two sons are attending school, and two others help the family in the cultivation of their fields.

The family has 10 acres of black soil irrigated by a bore well, and 30 acres of rainfed red soil land. Five years ago they were able to irrigate their black soil land as well as 5 acres of their neighbour's land in exchange for $\frac{1}{4}$ of the crops grown in those 5 acres of land. At present, however, as the water level in their bore well has gone down, they can only irrigate their own 10 acres of land.

Economic strategies

This year, Parvathamma's family grew maize (8 acres), groundnut (5 acres), wheat (1 acre), vegetables (2 acres), and *jowar* (5 acres). 8 acres of land were leased out for 1,500 rupees per year and the remaining 11 acres of land were left idle due to lack of investment. When asked why they leased their land for such a low price, Parvathamma replied that her family does not have enough money to invest in cultivating the land, and the risk of taking loans and having their crops return low yields that would make repaying the loan difficult is too high. She said that instead of keeping the land idle, it is better to lease it, and they were only able to lease it at a low price.

On average, her family spends about 70,000 rupees on cultivating the land (this includes cost of seeds, chemical fertilisers, pesticides, and labour) and reaps about 150,000 rupees if all the crops grow properly and fetch a good price on the market. Whatever they earn each year is sufficient to repay the loan made in the last year before they again take out a loan for the following year's investments. When asked why her family takes out a loan every year, Parvathamma explained that in agriculture, it takes at least three years to recover from the losses of one bad year with poor rain. They suffered one of those losses in the recent past, and have been in debt ever since.

Decision-making

When asked about her role in decision-making, she replied that decisions are taken jointly regarding all household activities, but when it comes to income-generating crops and selling of produce, decisions are taken only by her husband and sons.



Looking for new options

When asked about her plans for the future, she explained that it is very difficult to survive on agriculture alone, and that she would like to buy two more buffaloes, expand her dairy activities, and buy 3 to 4 sheep for rearing. Her son has plans for starting a poultry business.

Constraints on the family's economic strategies

When asked how it is that her family could not survive on agricultural income when previous generations were able to, she said that in the past crops gave better yields because there were good rains, there were no pest attacks like the ones they currently face, and no need to apply as much chemical fertiliser. The costs of production are now very high as there is no proper rainfall, high pest damage, labour costs have increased, and they are forced to use more chemical fertiliser because they are growing hybrid crop varieties. And even when they have proper rainfall and good crop yields, they often do not get proper market prices as, for example, when they had to sell tomatoes at the price of 1 rupee/kg instead of the regular price of 4-6 rupees/kg. Moreover, there is a large number of influences that are beyond the family's control (environmental problems, poor governmental policies, market fluctuations).

When asked why there is no proper rainfall, she immediately said because there are no trees left. The present generation only thought of today's income, and so they cut the big trees and sold them for 200 rupees with no thought for the future.

Basic expenses and cash constraints

The basic expenses of families have grown because of increased social pressure to spend money on school uniforms and fees, clothing, and festival celebrations. She added that she cannot avoid expenses like the ones she incurs for their tradition of celebrating a family festival called "Zatara" once every three years. For this festival her family has to invite guests and go to a temple which is 5 km away from the vil-



lage, where they make tents and stay for three days. For this festival she has to spend at least 10,000 rupees, and they cannot stop celebrating this festival because they believe that something bad will happen to their family if they do.

10 years ago, Parvathamma's father-in-law sold about 16 acres of land for 95,000 rupees. This money was used to repay the loan they had incurred for the weddings of their three daughters and other miscellaneous expenses like house repairs. When asked whether she had any plans to sell more land and spend the money to start up her own and her son's dairy and poultry businesses, Parvathamma said that nobody is coming forward to buy land, and that even the owner of the 16 acres of land which they sold 10 years ago is ready to give the land back to Parvathamma's family for the same price. Families seem to have a very low interest in acquiring land. She stated that unless a family has another business alongside agricultural production, it cannot have a decent livelihood today.

Analysis



What decision-making processes are there within the family?

Decisions on land management are taken at the household level, not on a disaggregated basis. Livelihood issues are decided at the joint family level. Similarly, decisions about asset holding, income sharing, consumption and decision-making are intra-household affairs that cannot easily be broken down and seen in isolation of other issues. However, the contextual exploration of decision-making and of the power vested in the hands of men and women can offer interesting insights into the gender aspects of livelihood systems.



What are the linkages within households between asset breakdown, consumption and income generation for men and women and decision-making power?

In this case, Parvathamma makes decisions on food-crop related issues, while the men in the family are in charge of commercial crops. This dichotomy has generally been observed by Sampark in the field: women care more for food security and household needs while men work for external income and status. Moreover, the value lent to external income generation is much higher than household care, and thus women often do not get the same level of recognition for their activities due to the lower prestige attributed to their efforts. For this reason their voices carry less weight than men's.



What is the relation between formal ownership and decision-making power?

Women's lack of formal ownership of land and cattle can also lead to their disempowerment in decision-making. In the case presented here, Parvathamma has substantial animal husbandry responsibilities; but more often women are not afforded the opportunity to manage (especially land) assets, as the assets are not seen as belonging to them, although they have sufficient knowledge of cattle and farming to manage them. This propagates a cycle: women do not own assets, therefore they do not manage the land, and since they do not manage the land, they (and future generations) should not be given control of land assets.



Lessons learned



The NGO's role in such cases is to formulate strategies for promoting gender equality within the household, such as enhancing women's ability to own landholdings and other assets and acquire external income or credit. An intra-household analysis of the interrelations between asset breakdowns, consumption, income generation, and decision-making needs to be made and awareness of these inter-relations raised before any change to livelihood systems can be brought about.



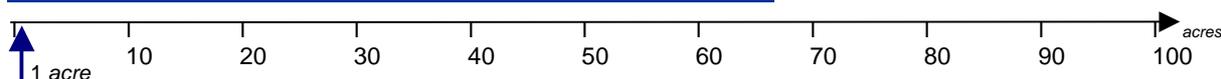
NGOs must uncover the underlying perceptions that negate and trivialise women's roles as farmers (see 'Changing Attitudes through Leadership Imaging: A Tool'). Manipulating outward manifestations of this issue as presented above will only cause a partial shift in patterns of behaviour. More fundamental is to address the fact that women's agricultural contributions are not seen as serious and valuable. Only when the inner/outer dichotomy is neutralised and women's contributions are valued properly will greater equality and decision-making power between men and women be effected.



3 Small, medium, and large landowners in Koppal



A small-scale farmer with 1 acre of land



Background

The family

Jambaya is a 48-year-old man living with his wife and two sons on 1 acre of land. The family grows maize and *jowar* (a millet crop) on this land; they also have 3 buffaloes, of which two were bought with a 10,000 rupee loan from the Grameen Bank under the Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP); this loan has since been repaid. The family have also taken a loan of 1,500 rupees from a Self Help Group this year for the purchase of seed and fertilisers.

Jambaya and his wife take most decisions jointly; they both cultivate their land and go for coolie work 4 months per year to earn 20 and 15 rupees respectively per day. Their two sons look after the buffaloes and sell the 8 litres of milk per day that the buffaloes produce during their 3 peak lactating months, earning 60 rupees per day. Per year, the family needs about 6,000 rupees for food, 2,000 for clothes, and 4,000 medical expenses. The *jowar* grown in their field is used as food grain; they earn about 2,500 to 3,000 rupees from their maize crop.

Constraints on the family's economic strategies

For the past 5 years Jambaya has been growing the same crops – maize and *jowar* – on the same land. He is aware that the fertility of the land can decrease and crop yields will lessen as a result of such overuse, but explains that since they have only one acre of land they must use it to grow *jowar* which is their main food, and use maize as their cash crop.

Ten years ago, they ran a hotel in the village. They closed the hotel and bought their current 1 acre of irrigated land for 60,000 rupees because the owner of the building



that they were using for their hotel was increasing the rent year by year until the business no longer earned a profit. Another reason for closing the hotel was that many people used their services on credit and then failed to pay them.

Jambaya diversified his activities from business to agriculture because of bad experiences with his hotel. He explained that at least land would be an asset to the family and also provide some income and food grain.

Jambaya's family has devised a mixed strategy of casual labour, land cultivation, and animal husbandry to ensure security of income.

(Photo by SAMPARK)

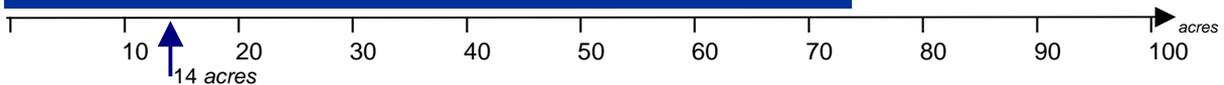


But along with this the family has to go for coolie work because there is not enough work and income from 1 acre of land to sustain them through the year. The priority for Jambaya's family is food security, so they do not have the choice of implementing crop rotation, which is a better land management method than the current unchanging choice of harvest.

Jambaya's family has a plan to expand their dairy business by taking another loan and buying one more buffalo.



A medium-scale farmer with 14 acres of land



Background

The family



Saroja is a 35-year-old woman living in an extended family with her husband, two children, two brothers-in-law, one co-sister and their children in Halle Gondabala village, 15 km away from the town of Koppal. Her family has 14 acres of land, of which 4 acres are under bore well irrigation and 10 acres are under Tungha Badra Tank irrigation. This costs 60 to 100 rupees per acre per year, depending on the crop they grow. They also have one pair of bullocks and a bullock cart which they use for cultivating the land.

Saroja would like to start a business but feels she does not have the necessary experience in business matters.

(Photo by SAMPARK)



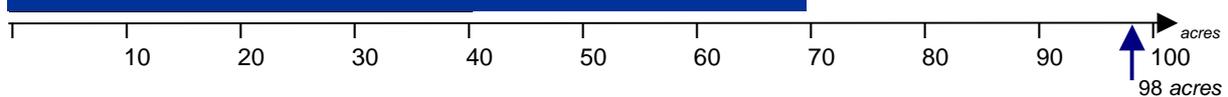
Saroja has 2 buffaloes, one of which produces 2 litres of milk per day, 1 litre of which is kept for household consumption and the other sold for 7 rupees within the village. Saroja also earns about 750 rupees per month working in a library. This year the family grew maize (5 acres), groundnut (2 acres), red gram (2 acres), and cotton (4 acres). On average the cost of cultivation is about 50,000 rupees, and at the end of the year they may earn 150,000 rupees if the crops grow properly and can be sold at a good price. Cotton residues are used as fuel.

Constraints on the family's economic strategies

In 1984, the family bought 6 acres of land at 35,000 rupees per acre by borrowing 100,000 rupees from moneylenders. Within two years they were able to repay the loan. In the past 3 to 4 years, however, they have not been getting good yields because of a higher number of insect and pest attacks. As a result, the family have an outstanding loan of 60,000 rupees with seed and fertiliser shops, which has accumulated over the past 3 years. Saroja's family need about 12,000 rupees per year for food, 6,000 rupees for clothes, 4,000 for medical expenses, and this year they have spent 5,000 rupees towards college fees for Saroja's son. Saroja says that nowadays agriculture is not profitable and sometimes it is difficult to meet their basic needs. She would like to start a business but feels she does not have any experience in business matters.



A large-scale farmer with 98 acres of land



Background

The family

Mallaya is a 45-year-old man living with three brothers and their families. They jointly own 98 acres of land. 15 years ago, their family had 100 buffaloes and 12 bullocks, but by now they have sold off everything and buy milk from the market. Mallaya says that without permanent labour it is very difficult to maintain animals, and labourers in the village tend to migrate for six months per year to far-away Rathnagiri and Gao to work in coffee and tea estates where they can earn 120 rupees per day.

Of their 98 acres of land, 50 acres are given for "Koulu" – a system where all expenses other than labour (such as the costs of fertilisers, pesticides, and seeds) are shared equally by the landowner and the tenant in return for an equal share of the profits. On the remaining 48 acres of land they grow groundnut, maize, vegetables and cotton. On average the cost of cultivation is about 5,000 to 6,000 rupees per acre, and profit reaped is about 2,000 to 3,000 rupees per acre.



Constraints on the family's economic strategies

All four men in the family state that they cannot depend on agriculture only, so along with their 98 acres of land they have a provisional shop which they open from 6.30 am to 12.30 pm and again in the evening from 4 pm to 8.30 pm. In a year the provisional shop gives them a profit of 25,000 rupees.



Mallaya points out that it is very difficult to manage agriculture on a large scale because the costs are very high.

(Photo by SAMPARK)

When asked why the region's land was so poor, Mallaya said that some families migrate from neighbouring states like Andhra Pradesh to buy land and cultivate it for 10 years, earning as much profit as they can before they exhaust the land, then sell it and move on elsewhere to buy new land. These families do not bother about developing the land and maintaining its fertility for the future because they know that they are going to sell it and move on.

He feels that people in the villages have also developed the attitude that whatever they earn today should be their focus, without any thought for the future. They thus spend their earnings on liquor and household consumption.

When asked about his land management plans for the future, he explained that he does not have any particular plans – all he and his brothers want is to be in the village, working on their land and in their provisional shop. If agriculture does not give proper yields then they can survive on the profits from the shop. He may enter into a partnership with his friend's shop in Koppal but does not have any plans for leaving his village.

Finally, he stated that it is very difficult to manage agriculture on a large scale because the demand for labour and the cost of fertilisers and pesticides are increasing; moreover, they are not earning proper prices for their crops. At the same time he cannot leave his land and move to a town because of his attachment to the land and to his birthplace.





Analysis



How is the gender division of labour organised and perceived?

When comparing the situation in small, medium, and large landholdings, it becomes apparent that the inside/outside dichotomy of work-division and decision-making power is more present in larger holdings than in smaller ones.



What factors support a gender-balanced relationship between division of labour and decision-making power?

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 In the situation of smaller landowners and among poorer populations, it seems that there is greater gender equality: men and women share land, labour and housework to a much greater extent, and decision-making is much more balanced between the sexes than in more privileged households with larger landholdings. The reason for this is that the income portfolios for poorer families have to be diversified, and all family members have to work in all possible areas, which necessitates more equality for women and increases respect for their contributions. In richer households where status dictates that women be more idle and confined to the home, women experience far less freedom and involvement in farm activities.
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 In the case of the small-scale farm with 1 acre of land, off-farm activities (owning a hotel) gave the formerly landless family enough earnings to be able to acquire land, and thus provide food security for the family and engage in animal husbandry. Choosing this way of living also freed family members to do casual labour for additional income. This mixed strategy of casual labour, land cultivation, and animal husbandry has established a triangle of income and security for the family, and has involved all members of the family, regardless of gender, in all three areas. By comparison, the medium-scale farm showed a clear division between men's (cash crop) and women's (small dairy and library) work.
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 On the large-scale farm, women's contributions were not mentioned at all.

Lessons learned



The major lesson here is that there is a major difference in management strategies depending on the size of landholdings. Livelihood strategies and gender issues vary a great deal, with smaller pieces of land and fewer assets leading to a diversification of strategies, more sharing of work and increased gender equality in the economic sphere.



Greater economic diversification within the household supports gender-balanced development. Access to cash and credits is essential in this case. Yet debts should not constitute additional risks.



The role of the NGO is to understand the interrelatedness of issues that make up livelihood systems at the household level, and to sensitise all household members to gender issues in order to catalyse change from within.



4 A family dedicated to stone cutting

Background

The family

Vollagappa is a 26-year-old man who lives in Koppal with his wife and two children. He, his two brothers, and their families live close to a small mountain 3 km from the town. For the past three generations their family has been involved in stone cutting as their main income-earning activity, with occasional seasonal agriculture and construction work.

The men cut big stone slabs from the face of the mountain and the women pound on small pieces to make “jelly”, gravel-sized stones used in preparing concrete. Their work is very difficult, and they are sometimes injured when cutting the stone. The big stone slabs take 20 days to complete and are sold at their proper price of 1,500 rupees when used for temple construction, but otherwise fetch only 700 rupees or a bag of *jowar* (grain) from other villagers. A cartload of jelly takes about 2 days to make and can be sold for about 200 rupees. On average, the family earns about 100 rupees per day during the peak season.

When we asked Vollagappa’s sister-in-law about her daily routine, she said that in the morning she finishes her housework and starts stone cutting by 10 a.m., by which time her husband (who begins earlier in the morning) will have cut enough big slabs to give her smaller pieces of stone to make into jelly. She works at this until 4-6 p.m. depending on the pressure of work, then returns home, begins fetching water and wood to prepare dinner and takes care of the children. Her husband finishes at about 3 p.m. and then rests and has some liquor. When we asked whether she takes any liquor, she replied that no, only men take liquor because men’s work is so very difficult.

Constraints on the family's economic strategies

Whenever they do not have any orders to process, they take loans at an interest rate of 3% per month, repaying that loan once there is work again. This constitutes their routine life. They feel there is no way to save money as their income is barely sufficient for meeting the costs of food, liquor (which they all believe is a necessity for men) and medical expenses. Another deeply rooted reason for not having any savings is their belief that the Goddess Lakshmi has cursed their caste (Vadru caste) and that this caste of people involved in the work of cutting stone cannot become rich as their work is against nature.

While they themselves accept and admit that their work is wrong and has no future, when asked why they continue they say that their family tradition dating back to the time of their forefathers was to be stone cutters. When asked what they will do once the Gudda (stone mountain) is completely depleted, they replied that the Gudda has served the past three generations without becoming depleted, and even if it is



depleted in their lifetime, their family can move to another Gudda. Their lives are clearly very difficult, but they feel they cannot change their way of living because they have no other skills with which to generate income. They also believe that if they do not cut and prepare the stone, other people cannot build houses.

Papa finishes his work at 3 p.m. Then he goes for a drink with his friends because his work is so terribly hard. What about mama? Well, after she finishes her share of stone cutting at 6 p.m. she only has to go and fetch water, look for some wood to cook dinner and take care of the babies. Nothing much really...

Analysis

How balanced is the gender division of labour?

The activity profile here reflects a great gender divide: women begin their day with housework, continue with a full day cutting stone, then go on to fulfil household and family duties after returning home, while men work from morning to 3 p.m., then waste their time or sit drinking, believing that a long day of work has earned them the right to do so. The women accept this view.

What new options does the community see?

The livelihood needs of the stone-cutting family are barely met by their income, and their choice of work is backbreaking and acknowledged to be wrong. It is accepted that they have no hope for improving their lives in the future, either for themselves or for later generations. Yet the family persists in its current course of action.



Lessons learned for NGOs



While persistence in the stone-cutting tradition could initially be seen as a puzzling choice to lead a very harsh life, from the standpoint of the family itself, it is an appropriate decision that is rooted in tradition, religious beliefs, and a form of pride in their contribution to society. For any change (like safety measures or facilities for savings and credits) to be fully accepted in their lives, these factors would have to be taken into consideration.



Perceptions that allow men to work only half the time women spend labouring, to give no support at home, and to spend family income on liquor, need to be questioned by an NGO. By bringing activity profiles to light and allowing both men and women to see their contributions to the family, by identifying and encouraging analysis of the deep cultural resistance to men doing household work, and by supporting development of new visions for the future, the NGO will take an important first step towards raising awareness of detrimental gender-based inequalities.



Building people's institutions will also help to channel the unharnessed energy of the men into more productive and esteem-building activities than drinking, which will contribute to the long-term goal of increased household savings and diminished pressure on the natural environment.

'Role-Play': an awareness-creating tool

One participatory tool developed by SAMPARK is Role-Play: it aims to facilitate self-understanding. In this case, information supplied by stone-cutters was compiled into a script to dramatise their lives and dilemmas. The play was performed by stone-cutters before their community at their annual drama festival. It highlighted leadership, natural resource management, gender and poverty issues as seen from the community's standpoint, and generated intense debate and reflection among the stone-cutters.



5 A tool to change attitudes: “Leadership Imaging”

A participatory tool that SAMPARK has found particularly effective and useful in discussing gender roles and raising community awareness of ingrained beliefs is called “Leadership Imaging”. While SAMPARK’s use of this tool has been confined to its work in building people’s institutions and developing leadership among women in rural villages, we are curious as to its applications in the promotion of women’s involvement in land management, and include it in this document as a possibility for promoting acceptance of women as farmers. An excerpt from SAMPARK’s manual on Leadership Imaging follows:

What is Leadership Imaging?



Leadership Imaging is a research tool that helps people to articulate their understanding of the qualities that they expect to find in leaders.

It is a participatory technique that can engage groups or communities in an examination of their attitudes and beliefs with respect to social structures and boundaries, and can bring dormant issues to the fore.



In brief, Imaging exercises run as follows:

A **facilitator** explains the exercise to the group selected for the purpose. A volunteer lies down on a large piece of cloth and the outline of his or her body is drawn.

Armed with this sketch as a framework, the group discusses the qualities that they believe are important for leadership, and a scribe locates these at appropriate places.

The labelled image is then suspended vertically and someone from the group uses it to make a presentation to the larger audience. This is a good time to initiate discussion about gender and leadership or other contextual issues relevant to the understanding of leadership. Different groups presenting their visions before a community can spark a community-wide dialogue on associated issues.



Who should use Leadership Imaging?

The Leadership Imaging tool is intended for those dealing with development issues. It emerged from a research project on sustainable livelihood systems, spread over six years (1994-1999). Several participatory tools were adapted and used during this period but Leadership Imaging has been one of the most effective. Researchers, trainers, students and learners will find the description of this exercise interesting as it helps to gain a gender-differentiated and gender-integrated perspective of leadership. Field staff engaged in developmental activities can conduct these exercises with the women and men who form constituencies and with those who are leaders.

Some uses

The following examples are based on a series of exercises done with villagers, leaders and other groups:

⊙ As an initial exercise, a group of rural women, all of whom were members of Self-Help Groups engaged in savings and credit, profiled a woman leader in the context of a Self-Help Group. The next exercise was done with male farmers, who imaged a village leader (they were aware of their right to vote for a leader of their choice, and their image reflected their optimism in a scenario where cynicism is prevalent due to negative experiences with leaders). Both groups made their presentations to the village. Here, the participants consolidated their image of a leader at the community level and initiated a lively dialogue that involved them, as well as a wider audience, including the youth and old men/women in the village.

⊙ One Leadership Imaging exercise was carried out with a mixed group of women and men leaders belonging to the Panchayat. They chose to image a male leader. An altercation arose between the women and the men during the presentation. The women felt that they were not given sufficient opportunities for participation in decision-making, while the men believed that women were either not interested or incapable of effective decision-making.





Some benefits

Leadership Imaging facilitates learning and has the potential to initiate a process of change.

The various benefits of using the tool include:



Gaining insight into what people expect in leaders and how images of women differ from those of men;



Involving the group totally in visual imaging, rather than just verbal expression, and creating a space for both women and men to express their expectations;



Providing a platform for discussion. The presentations, in particular, spark off lively dialogue with perceptions being questioned and opinions voiced. This is the beginning of a process of thinking, articulation, questioning one another, self-examination, reality checks, and change.

Concluding thoughts

Finally, here is a word of caution to the researchers and development workers who might consider using this tool. Like any other research and training methodology, this is only one of the many tools that are relevant in any given development situation. It is very time consuming, and should be used only if it is likely to be helpful to people.

It is important to be sensitive to any resistance that people may have to whatever part of the exercise. The facilitator needs to respect the feelings of people and has to find out the reason for the resistance, waiting, working with them to overcome it. If necessary, the researcher should be willing to give up the exercise, rather than coaxing or forcing the people into continuing with something that they do not like, enjoy, or find useful.

We have worked with this tool only in rural situations and mostly with illiterate women and men. For these people, imaging was a very powerful exercise, in that it helped them to visualise a leader using the traced-out figure, and then talk about the leader's characteristics. It helped people to learn from and articulate their experiences with leaders, and then state expectations. In our experience, villagers thoroughly enjoyed participating in this learning exercise.

The tool is amenable to adaptation, and the creativity of researchers and development workers is likely to be utilised fully in the application of this tool. It may be used for research and development purposes, to explore, understand and develop the full potential for leadership among women and men in the villages, in order to build their capacities for better and more sustainable management of their natural resources, as well as improvement of their livelihoods.



6 Case study of watershed management by SAMUHA

In January 2000, SAMUHA began a 3-year watershed project in Hosur and Hasgal villages of Koppal District with funding from Plan International. SAMUHA, due to its understanding of the need to institutionalise women's participation in decision-making, decided to set up women's-only groups that would be responsible for the implementation of the labour required in the watershed project. This approach was a deliberate attempt at breaking stereotypes and at leaving major decision-making power in the hands of women. SAMUHA's approach has had the following results to date.

Overview of the organisation and project area

SAMUHA is a voluntary organisation founded in 1986 under the sponsorship of Action Aid, and works in the areas of disability, HIV/AIDS, information technology, and people's organisation. It has 6 years' worth of experience implementing watershed programmes in Tavarakeri Taluk of Raichur District in Karnataka State.

210 staff work in 290 villages, primarily with poor families living in dry regions. The objective of the organisation is to "improve the quality of life of the people we work with in defined periods of time".

The overall objective of SAMUHA's watershed project is to support farmers and village communities in their own efforts to improve their livelihood in semi-arid rural areas. In the context of this overall objective the project works to develop and implement strategies for sustainable, participatory and integrated development of small watersheds in different agro-climatic zones. These strategies consist essentially of the formation of autonomous and self-sustaining community organisations, the development and application of appropriate treatments leading to long-term stabilisation of the agro-ecosystem, as well as sustained management of and equitable access to resources.

The region in which SAMUHA staff work is characterised as follows:

- Untouchability and child marriage are practised in the villages; the dowry system prevails; alcoholism, bonded labour, and money lending also occur.
- Most of the people are uneducated and few of them complete primary level education. Compared to men, the literacy level of women is very low. Few of them have finished degree level education. Most girl children discontinue their education during the primary level because of poverty, and because of poor transport facilities.
- Rainfed agriculture is the primary occupation. It engages villagers in the 4 or 5 months of the year when it rains. A few lift irrigation sets are available.
- The major crops grown are *jowar* (sorghum), groundnut, *sajje*, *navanee* (minor millets), sunflower, sesame, and horse gram. The few farmers with access to water grow paddy.



- To support agricultural activity, cows, buffaloes, bulls, and oxen are kept. Poultry, pigs and sheep are kept by some to supplement their income.
- Women take a back seat in the community's decision-making. The elected women members of the Panchayat (village level forum) merely act at the behest of their menfolk, and are not active during discussions in the Panchayat.
- In general, it is noticeable that women's health is a neglected area.

The Watershed Programme and the Women's Labour Committee (WLC)

The very dry climate in Koppal District creates a large demand for water projects. This case study focuses on SAMUHA's decision to institutionalise a women-only decision-making body in the male-dominated sphere of land management.

In developing the community decision-making structures for its watershed project in Koppal, SAMUHA oversaw the forming of the Women's Labour Committee (WLC), which comprises 18 female representatives from the two villages involved in the watershed project. The WLC, along with the Watershed Development Committee, the Landless Labour Committee, and a higher-tier committee called the Gram Samite, is in charge of managing and implementing the watershed project. The main role of the WLC is to manage the labour involved in building the erosion- and water-retention mounds (called bunds) and check dams for the community.

Many of the women who joined the WLC had little to no previous experience in community decision-making bodies, and found themselves wielding substantial decision-making power as they could decide how and to whom the jobs and wages for the labour required in the project would be allocated.

Some experiences made by women in the WLC

Mallamma lives in Hosur village, and Savanthamma and Neelamma live in Asagal village.

The women meet with the other members of their village WLC once a week to hand out payments to the labourers of the previous week and also to discuss and arrange next week's work. The achievement of their WLCs is that they have constructed bunds for 35 out of 65 families in Hosur and for 85 out of 150 families in Asagal village. In both villages the Committees assign 2 labourers to the formation of 1 bund and pay 65 rupees for this job, which can be finished in one day.

The Hosur village WLC has decided to assign one male and one female to build the bunds in their village, reasoning that female-only teams cannot form bunds on their own. Thus, families that have only female members hire male members from another family for the formation of their bund. The wage of 65 rupees is then shared equally among the two (male and female) labourers.

In Asagal village, however, some of the bunds have been formed by women only, the main reason for this being that the family forming the bund did not want to give 32.50 rupees of the bund wage to another family. The bund income motivated women to do the work that is usually carried out by men.



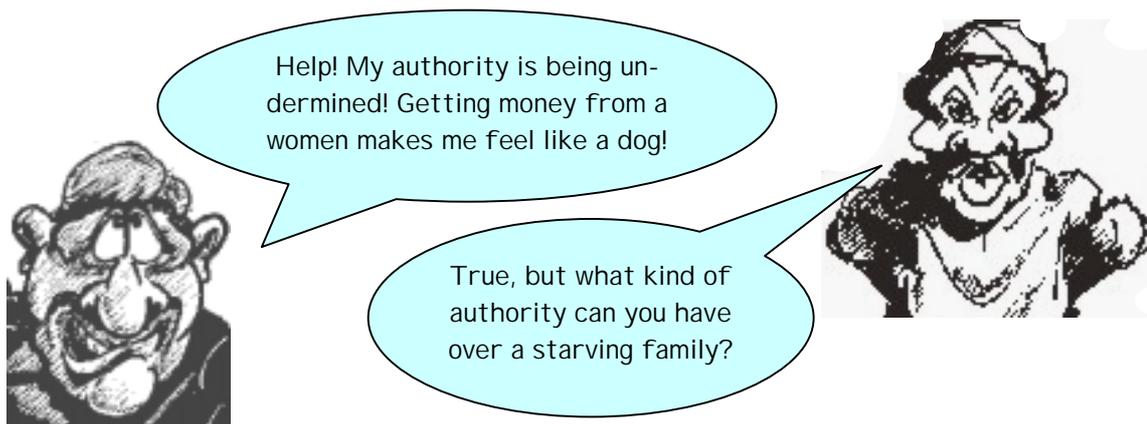
Sustainability of the project: The income from project labour motivated people much more than perceived project benefits. When asked whether families would maintain and repair their bunds after the project was completed, or whether villagers would build bunds without SAMUHA's support, members of the WLC replied that villagers believed that the time taken away from income-generating activities to build and repair bunds would be time wasted. Much of the current high involvement in the project stems from the wages that the labourers receive.



Income and bargaining power: Usually in both villages men are involved in digging and women cart away dug-out soil. In agriculture, the daily wage for women is 12 to 15 rupees and for men 15 to 20 rupees per day, depending on the season. Mallamma and Savanthamma say that men receive higher wages because they do hard work like ploughing which women cannot perform. They explain that they do not have any bargaining power with landowners for getting equal wages in agricultural work. They fear losing what wages they do receive in the process of negotiating with the landowner. In both villages only in SAMUHA's project work do men and women receive equal wages: women engaged in non-project agricultural and construction work are usually paid 20-25% less than men.

The gender problem and its resolution

In both villages, at the start of the project, the members of the WLC faced many problems with the men. Men said that they could not work under women and that taking wages from them was an insult. As the villagers did not want to lose the income from project work or the project benefits, however, they accepted the Women's Labour Committee.



But even then, the men initially would disturb WLC meetings by saying to their wives who were members: "how many hours will you go on spending in this meeting?! Come home and cook food and look after the children!". However, after some time and with continued assistance from SAMUHA and mutual support among the women, the resistance of the men was worn down. Savanthamma (she is also a member of a Self-Help Group formed by SAMUHA) reports that her husband now cooperates with her, and by the time she finishes her weekly meetings, he has cooked and kept ready a meal for the family.



Activity results

SAMUHA staff report that their rationale for creating women-only groups was that 80% of agricultural labour is done by women, and that it would only be fair that the majority decision-making also be conferred to them. Since having men in the decision-making forums would have made women hesitant to challenge stereotypes, SAMUHA divided the roles so that men, who dominated the watershed association, were responsible for what treatments would be undertaken and the costs, while women were responsible for the implementation. Again, the supervision of works would be done by men, and SAMUHA felt that by getting men to interact with women as 'contractors' they would be forced to deal with the breaking of one stereotype, in addition to having to acknowledge the quality of work done by them.

In assessing the impact of this decision, SAMUHA staff say that even though women faced some problems in the beginning, at present they run their committees very well. In the mixed Watershed Development Committee meetings, the three women members of the committee actively participate along with male members. Furthermore, Savanthamma, a WLC member, says that given the changes that have occurred in the attitudes of some of the families in the community, she feels that slowly the women in the village can begin to fight for equal wages in agriculture.

As this project is only 12 months old, its longer-term sustainability and impact are unknown. SAMUHA hopes to change the attitude of the villagers (who put immediate pay-off ahead of building or maintenance of the bunds) before the end of its activities in the area, otherwise the benefits of the watershed project will be limited. Meanwhile, breaking the self-propagating cycle of segregation which ensures that men perform one task while women perform another, has been a big accomplishment for the project, and will likely have interesting ripple effects in the longer term that will reduce gender inequalities.

Analysis and lessons learned



This case study shows that the progressive acceptance and effectiveness of women's participation and decision-making at the community level increased over time with sustained support and guidance from the NGO. Similarly, there was a change in labour division within the family. It may be that if women are increasingly allowed to play larger roles in tasks at the community level, men will be able to see benefits more clearly and will be more willing to make adjustments at home.



SAMUHA's very clear policy stand in this project created space for women to assume non-traditional roles within the community and contribute to and participate in community development in a positive way. The community was then pushed to accommodate and adjust to the new roles women had taken on, and expanded their conception of the possible roles for both men and women in their villages. Proper awareness programmes will need to support the natural resource management and gender components in this project in order for the benefits to take on a spread effect after the end of SAMUHA's presence in the region.



7 Case study of Parivarthana's vermicomposting programme

Parivarthana is a voluntary organisation based in Hunsur Taluk in Mysore District, Karnataka State. Its project work focuses on "Environment Education and Action and Women's Development" and has been implemented in partnership with Christian Aid.

The main objective of the project is to create environmental awareness and facilitate the process of greening villages. Its propagation of vermiculture (breeding of earthworms) for sustainable agriculture, in particular, offers interesting lessons on the role of gender in programme acceptance.



Overview of the organisation and project

Parivarthana's main objectives are to:

- Provide environmental education to people,
- Initiate activities on sustainable rural agriculture,
- Develop women and weaker sections of society,
- Supplement and support anti-poverty programmes of the government,
- Create people's organisations.

Parivarthana chose Hunsur Taluk as its project area on account of the following factors:

- Forests of the semi-Malnad area were being degraded by people;
- Cultivation of tobacco as a commercial crop in agricultural fields had become rampant, thus contributing to soil degradation, loss of fertility, and loss of biomass for the land;
- Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (these are particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged castes that are included in the Schedule of the Constitution of India, whereby reservations are granted to these castes for education and government services) and women were being exploited by the affluent farmers.



Parivarthana, headed by Mr. G.S. Raje Gowda as Project Director and supported by 9 staff members, implemented its project in three stages:



1. During the **Pilot Phase (1991-92)**, Parivarthana worked in 18 villages, conducting environmental awareness programmes/workshops and fostering tree planting in community places and in agricultural fields.



2. During **Phase I (1992-96)**, Parivarthana's focus changed from Environmental Education and Village Greening to Environmental Education and Action, and Women's Development. This was to ensure that the project inputs would reach the poorer and more vulnerable sections of society, and to avoid the majority of project benefits flowing to affluent farmers.

Apart from ongoing activities, Phase I activities were formulated to include the following:

- Formation of women Self-Help Groups and women's organisations;
- Training for raising Tree Nurseries;
- Support for raising Tree Nurseries;
- Planting including horticulture and forest trees;
- Development of kitchen gardens;
- Savings and credit programmes for Self-Help Group members;
- Support to Self-Help Groups through matching grants;
- Construction of Self-Help Group houses;
- Vermiculture and bio-pesticide propagation.



3. **Phase II (1996-1999)** of the project saw a continuation and diversification of the programmes above and strengthening of the women's Self-Help Groups.

The vermiculture programme

Parivarthana conducted training programmes on environment, leadership skill development, agroforestry, savings and credit, horticulture, health and nutrition, and sustainable agriculture, among others, to promote village awareness. Under sustainable agriculture, Parivarthana introduced vermiculture in the second half of Phase I. Sufficient training programmes and demonstrations were conducted for women's Self-Help Groups in keeping with Parivarthana's reformulated focus on women and weaker members of the community.

At the time of introducing vermiculture into the villages, necessary inputs were provided to give a fillip to the activity. In addition to training, each Self-Help Group was provided with 4 cement bins and 1000 worms to develop vermicompost. It was later established that the cement bins were insufficient and uneconomical, so Parivarthana devised methods to develop vermicompost in pits, and finally, as a long-term measure and for technical reasons, it was decided to produce vermicompost in brick pits.



The gender problem and its resolution

The training was very successful and the women became very convinced of the usefulness of the vermicomposting technology. After the preparation of the vermicompost, however, women were not able to test it in the fields even though most of the women's families had land. This was because the women could not convince the men in their families to apply the vermicompost as the men feared it would ruin their crops.



Then, at the request of the women's Self-Help Group members, Parivarthana conducted vermiculture training for men and women together, and this convinced the men to try the compost in their fields and observe for themselves the difference in the crops grown with vermicompost and those grown using chemical fertilisers. The men saw the advantages of vermicomposting, and from then onwards Parivarthana decided to also cover men's groups in project training – especially in areas related to land management, where most of the decisions are made by male members of the family.

Activity results

The vermiculture initiative was well received, as people were willing to contribute in terms of both effort and materials to establishing vermicompost pits in their backyards and farm lands. Some of the Self-Help Group members have produced a substantial amount of vermicompost which has been used in their fields. Now they have reached a stage where they are willing to compare the effect of vermicompost on agricultural yields with that of chemical fertilisers.

Since villagers have shown adequate interest and have identified the benefits of vermicompost, there is a high probability that the activity will be sustainable and spread out to other farmers in the village. Parivarthana's effort yielded good results, with the initial supply of 20,000 worms (obtained from the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, India) multiplying extensively to over 2,000,000.

In one instance, a woman put in a great deal of effort to develop vermicompost in spite of the fact that she did not possess any land. When asked why she had done so, she replied that after seeing the results on other fields she became very motivated to develop vermicompost as she could use it on land taken on lease. She saw that she would be able to save 400 rupees every year which otherwise she would have had to spend on a bag of chemical fertiliser. Her leased agricultural land has since yielded a good *ragi* crop, and this example has been an eye-opener for the



members of her Self-Help Group and encouraged other farmers to examine the vermiculture option more closely.

Analysis and lessons learned



This case study clearly shows that concentrating only on women can lead to the danger of programme failure. There is often a need to plan the involvement of both women and men (or the family as a whole). Technical training given only to men can exclude women from capacity building and from participation in development projects. Likewise, technical training given only to women may result in no impact at field level if men do not support a trial of the new initiative. Thus, in many cases, training should cover both women and men for better acceptance of new projects as well as faster spread of good practice.



The impact of the gender approach in the vermiculture programme has been the extension of women's involvement and participation in land management activities through offering women:

- a responsibility (to produce vermicompost),
- a credible tie-in to their current domain (through re-use of kitchen/garden/household scraps),
- a clearly beneficial product to contribute to farming activities (cheap fertiliser with good yields).



This case study also shows that projects that have immediate economic benefits will convince people very much of their advantages, will motivate them to accept the projects, and will strengthen the projects' sustainability in the longer term. The example of the landless woman's efforts in vermicomposting demonstrates that when economic advantages are clear, innovations in natural resource management will be sparked that significantly improve the coping strategies of vulnerable sectors of the community.

SAMPARK's replication of this vermiculture programme with a mixed gender approach has met with rapid acceptance and implementation of vermicomposting strategies in villages. Direct training on vermiculture was provided to men and women in 7 villages along with a demonstration with staff from a local NGO (called BAIF). Inputs necessary for vermicomposting were also provided at that time. Then women group leaders were taken on a visit to the sites of another NGO (called Chinyard), where they saw the results of a vermicomposting pit and spoke with the women in charge of those pits, learning about its advantages and practical implementation details. Following this visit, they spread the news within their groups and thus, through them and their families, a high level of acceptance for the project was achieved.



MODULE 6

Gender Issues in SLM: Examples from Kenya – A Consultant's Perspective

Report from Francisca Maina
Gender and Development Consultant, Nairobi, Kenya.

Overview of Examples

-  1 Participatory poverty assessment studies
-  2 The Kilifi District Development Programme – An integrated participatory development process
-  3 The Voi Community Land Trust Project
-  4 The Food Assisted Child Survival Programme (FACS) in Ng'arua, Laikipia
-  5 The Green Towns Project
 - o Example: Homa Bay Green Towns Project*
 - o Example: Ol Kalou Green Towns Project*



1 Participatory poverty assessment studies (1997)

Institutional setting

A set of Participatory Poverty Assessment Studies were done in seven districts in Kenya in 1997. They were conducted with the purpose of filling gaps regarding dimensions of poverty that quantitative studies could not explain.

The overall study was commissioned by the Minister for Planning and National Development, under whose portfolio the Central Bureau of Statistics falls. This is a major breakthrough in that the national statistics custodian departed from the traditional norm to accommodate alternative forms of data for national planning. National programmes have been developed on the basis of these statistics. The National Poverty Eradication Plan, the National Poverty Eradication Programme and the National Poverty Eradication Strategy Paper are based on these data.





An enhanced type of gender disaggregated data

The Participatory Poverty Assessment Studies were carried out using a socio-economic welfare thematic approach. Despite the fact that data were gender disaggregated, so far little useful gender-specific information on land and natural resources has been retrieved – this being a recent approach. However a review of the programme indicates that the nation-wide participatory process sensitised all partners to gender mainstreaming in statistics. This is in itself a major milestone coming from a government agency that has been predominantly traditional in its approach. In principle the Participatory Poverty Assessment Studies therefore gave credibility to qualitative and innovative gender-disaggregated statistics for planning, and this also means that there is no reason why the same kind of statistics cannot be used for an analysis of land and natural resource issues in future.

Information on women’s contribution to agriculture

As a result other agencies have confidently begun using this kind of data. The Winrock International Agency sponsored a pilot project by the Ministry of Agriculture to generate statistics that would reflect women’s contribution in development. The work focused on six villages in a rural area called Githunguri in the Central Province. Information on economic and non-economic activities on the farms was obtained and monetary values were applied to these activities.

Experience gained by the project showed that men made most decisions at household level, and were more involved in construction work (91.4%), wage employment (54%) and natural resource conservation work (including afforestation and soil conservation) (83.9%). Women concentrated on domestic care (81%), fetching firewood (70%), fetching water (65%) and health care (53%).

When monetary values were applied to these activities, women’s work had a higher economic value than that of men, and the value of women’s reproductive work was also higher. The pilot project, which is now in a second phase, has proved the possibility of collecting, analysing and documenting important gender statistics. It is now advocating a similar nation-wide programme. With such precedents, other agencies can confidently generate and work with innovative forms of data.

Analysis



In developing countries (Kenya included), research is given a low profile in development activities outside academic circles. Consequently, data are only collected when a specific demand for them is expressed. Gender disaggregated data, though largely accepted in principle, are not widely generated.



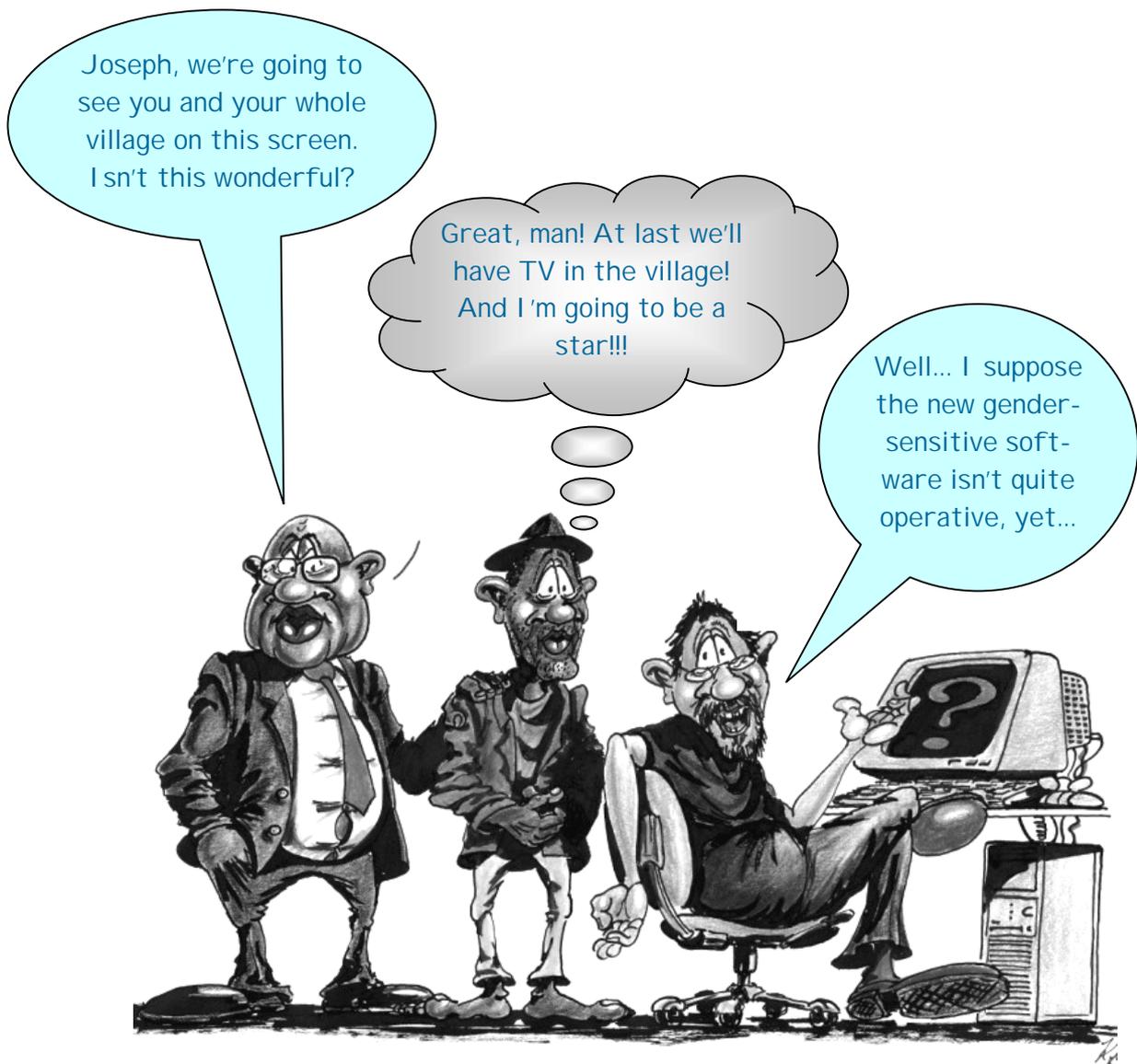
Furthermore, most academic disciplines closely cling to conventional research methods. Where data have been generated through qualitative analysis, their public acceptance is usually not ensured, despite their usefulness for planning and implementing projects. Unless the public level institutions depart from traditional statistical norms that are bound to hardcore academic statistical measures, and commit



themselves to practical statistics for sustainable development, not much can be achieved in the area of integrating gender in research and development.



The private and non-governmental institutions will not have much impact unless the government bureaux of statistics verify or give credibility to such output. However, with the encouragement of multilateral donor institutions, the data generated in the above case were accepted and have been used for planning.





2 The Kilifi District Development Programme – An integrated participatory development process

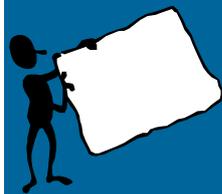
(Formerly the Kilifi Water and Sanitation Programme)

This programme has evolved through several institutional arrangements, as shown by the change of name. The current status (since 1998) was arrived at by a shift whereby service providers were reorienting services made available to the communities on the basis of community demands rather than external agents’ priorities.

The planning process that ensued covered several participatory procedures, among them the gender calendar approach presented to both sexes. After discussions, it turned out that women’s workloads were heavier than men’s, with suggestions that men should devote more time to community improvement work.

A tool to analyse the gender division of labour

The [Daily Activity Charts](#) used in the Kilifi project are based on the seasonal calendar technique. The calendar may be applied to answer either seasonal or daily workloads of participants. One can use it to study the commitments and responsibilities of both sexes at the household or community levels.



The process flows according to concrete situations, but the core features are as follows, assuming a focus group setting:

- 1 Community and facilitator assemble.
- 2 Ice breaking and rapport building follows, then the facilitator introduces the purpose and the procedure of the exercise to the participants.
- 3 Participants are divided according to gender-specific focus groups (women and men). Where the community is large, care should be taken to ensure that each group has no more than twelve and no fewer than six members, to facilitate the participatory analysis of data.
- 4 Within each group a pairing process takes place. The exercise will be carried out in twos. Participants choose and agree on what material and symbols they wish to use to effect their communication. These are not necessarily pen and paper or alphabetical symbols.



- 5 Each partner interviews the other in turn and records information in a sequence. For example in the case of a daily activity chart, Mary asks Jane to narrate sequentially when she gets up and what she is doing until bedtime on a typical day, and vice versa.
- 6 The pairs in each focus group come together and merge their results to make one typical daily activity chart, assisted by the facilitator. (Participatory skills are applied to ensure the output is representative and typical of the group.)
- 7 The gender-specific focus groups then come together and further compare and analyse their typical seasonal calendars.
- 8 Initially the charts should be presented and adopted as the true position. Then an analytical review of the implications is undertaken and emerging issues are noted. This is what was done in the Kilifi project, whereby it dawned to all that actually – based on self-generated evidence – the women were overloaded with work and the men were quite idle. The facilitator then assumes the role of a mediator and advocate, and sensitises the community to the need to correct these anomalies, emphasising the gains to the entire community, before leading them through the final step proposing and adopting resolutions.

Such a process could be applied to activities in SLM and NRM as a strategy and measure of equal responsibility that both sexes can contribute to these areas. For example, one could take climate and seasons, and focus the points of reference on SLM and NRM activities. This is most relevant where communal or group interventions to SLM and NRM are envisaged.

Dangers/Specific hints



Daily activity charts can be a sensitive issue to some community members, especially if they are older than the facilitator and not of the same sex. The best approach is to pair community members according to similar characteristics (age and sex) and have them lead one another through the chart. Alternatively, pair a respondent with a facilitator who shares similar characteristics. Another danger that could arise through insensitive process facilitation is to pit both sexes against each other, in that one sex may interpret the process as indirectly accusing them of being lazy. The skill and acceptability of a facilitator are of substantial significance to the success of the programme.



3 The Voi Community Land Trust Project

As a positive response to severe housing problems, the Voi Community Land Trust Project (since 1992) gave specific attention to actor empowerment, cost control, the legislative framework, the building standards regime and the land tenure system.



The project demonstrated that upgrading a low income squatter settlement does not have to lead to the displacement of beneficiaries or their selling out to economically more powerful groups.

By the early 1990s, a third of the total population in Voi, a small town in Kenya’s coastal province, was squatting on government, railway and private sisal estate lands. When the project began a total of 4370 persons lived in the settlement in 530 structures. The living environment was poor, as structures were old, dilapidated, overcrowded and without security of tenure. Women headed households comprised 61.8%. The residents were very poor, with 30% unemployed, 40% earning less than 8 US\$ per month, and the rest earning up to 30 US\$. With no access to credit and no security of tenure, life was bleak.

The local authority approached the Small Towns Development Project of the Ministry of Local Government, and the Community Land Trust Project came into being. Relevant partnerships were forged; legal systems were addressed to accommodate a new tenure system where land was to be held by the entire community on behalf of the residents; credit for upgrading was facilitated. Tenants and structure owners were included in the process whereby the entire community benefited from improved structures in a better organised living environment, a sustainable social system and security of tenure.



Lessons learned included:

- There is a willingness to pay for and participate in working towards secure tenure even among very poor communities.
- Incremental improvement of the living environment, if supported by the policy environment, leads to sustainability.
- Many partners with various resources exist, waiting for opportunities to assist poor communities as long as they are organised.

Further important results of the project were:



Strategic use of the legal system

- The community land trust tenure system (CLT) was adopted because it provided security of tenure, although initially it was not recognised by Kenyan law. The intention was to override the capitalistic land-market forces on poor people by putting the land into the hands of the community, with individual community members owning the improvements which they have undertaken in their plots. They can also inherit and bequeath these improvements. If a member wants to move out, he/she can only sell the improvements but not the land. Land and development were therefore separated.
- To legalise the CLT, legal documents were developed in consultation with key government officials from various ministries. Since no single legislation was found to be suitable, the project explored a number of possibilities within existing laws, with the assistance of a legal team. The community was then organised into a legally recognised entity with its own constitution and rules that are consistent with the concept of CLT, and registered under the Societies Act.
- A Trust Deed was prepared to guide the Board of Trustees on how to manage the land. Trustees were appointed and registered under the Trustees (Perpetual Succession) Act. To reinforce the Trust Deed, conditions consistent with CLT were negotiated with the Commissioner of Lands to be included in the headlease. Since the land was to be allocated under one Title, an Approved Development Plan showing boundaries and public purpose facilities had to be registered under the Documentation Act. Finally subleases from the Trust to each qualified member of the society were prepared, providing for security of tenure, regulating land utilisation and binding the members to CLT.



Communal ownership and gender-balanced development

- This case has been submitted to several international and regional fora and deemed a best practice case. It has also been replicated in another area of Kenya recently. This is a case that not only involved major shifts in land administration policy and practice, but also required subsidiary legislation in order to accommodate the participatory aspects of securing tenure. The land covers both the housing, kitchen gardens and the communal open spaces.
- Regarding ownership, 62% of the 530 structures were found to be owned by women because they were residents and heads of households in the area before the project began. The process ensured that both women and men were recognised as equal stakeholders based on their status as heads of households. The structure owners make decisions regarding improvements as they arise, independently.
- An owner – whether woman or man – can decide to sell, but the communal trust bylaws restrict sales to outsiders. One may sell the improvements but not the land, because it is communally owned. One may also bequeath improvements plus interest to an heir or heiress, and formalise the same with the Trust and the Government



Land Registry. Counselling sessions with the Board of Trustees (consisting of community representatives, the local authority representative and central government representatives) follow. When the Board is satisfied that the intended sale is not detrimental to the member and has not been unduly influenced, the sale is allowed but must be made to the Trust and offered for sale to the general community. This procedure has secured tenure to all groups. Not only did it increase the level of empowerment for women (against the background of very discriminatory and repressive traditions and customs) and for the community as a whole; it also gave the community a long-term basis for social responsibility to manage their land and environment in a sustainable manner.

The process requires intensive sensitisation of and collaboration between all partners, as well as a definite commitment from the community regarding the choice of permanent tenure. It can of course also be applied to stable communities whose members have co-existed for a long time.



Women in Kenya participate in training in using small field tools

(by FAO)



4 The Food Assisted Child Survival Programme (FACS) in Ng’arua, Laikipia

Context of the project

The programme, implemented by the Archdiocese of the Catholic Church with a non-parochial aim, began in 1981 by providing food relief to the communities but has since extended its mandate.

The parish project combines both humanitarian welfare – with aid given mainly during severe drought and famine periods – and assistance to displaced persons who are victims of occasional outbursts of ethnic violence. Its normal goal is to sensitise communities and assist them in adopting sustainable food security practices through integrated intervention measures ranging from on-farm crop management to post-harvest storage and marketing options.

Indeed, the families lacked grain storage technology and marketing information; they were set upon by cartels of unscrupulous middlemen during harvesting seasons and compelled to sell their grain produce at throw-away prices, only to face starvation soon thereafter. The impact of this on the welfare of women and families was devastating.

Project activities

Programme activities include water projects, projects to feed the hungry, health interventions, income generating projects, community village banks and a parish cereals board. The cereals board functions as a grain marketing co-operative, in that it checks middlemen, cartels and price levels. Farmers may deliver their produce to the parish cereals co-operative board, which buys the produce at reasonable prices, stores it and resells it to households for consumption at reasonable prices. The parish cereals co-op board does not sell any food for resale. The community village banks instituted by the parish provide simple banking facilities for the families. They are especially useful for the women, who do not need huge sums and therefore do not have to open bank accounts in a town located twenty-five kilometres away. These simple rural women are thus spared the technological shock of having to deal with a modern bank.



Analysis



Who produces the cereals? Who is going to store them in whose name?

This is an important issue. Women produce the cereals as farm workers, but they usually do not own the land. The land belongs to their husbands (except in the case of widows); most of them live away from home, usually in towns to try and make a living, but they are consulted on what cereals and how much acreage to plant. When the women produce, it is in the name of the family. The cereals are stored under the family name – usually the man’s name – and sometimes as a joint account under the couple’s names. The wife may access the money when the husband is away, unless he imposes caveats, which is rare.



Can the project improve women’s position and decision-making power within the household?

The answer is yes. First as a church supported initiative, the ultimate goal is family welfare. Even the project name, “Food Assisted Child Survival”, was developed from the needs that the church had in caring for destitutes who were farmers but lost their produce to exploitative middlemen. The project gives equal weight to women and men wishing to register and have accounts in the community village banks. Individual decisions are based on individual family positions. Thanks to the co-operative system and group pressure, the programme has ensured household food security, direct protection of women from grain cartels and middlemen, and indirect protection from undue male exploitation. Before this intervention poor families and other vulnerable groups were at the mercy of market forces.

It may be worth mentioning here that the community programmes of this particular church are based on Liberation Theology, which seeks to achieve transformation in terms of self-perception, self-worth and human rights through training, challenge, demonstration and a do-it-yourself approach. Compared to other welfare-based church programmes, this project guarantees the sustainability of transformations among women and men. It does not specifically adopt a Women in Development (WID) approach, but seeks to strengthen the complementary roles of both sexes and integrate single-headed households deliberately as vulnerable groups.



5 The Green Towns Project

Overview of the project

The ‘Green Towns’ project (Phase II since 2000) had the overall objective of sustainable integration of environmental considerations into urban development, in order to achieve a healthy and aesthetically attractive urban environment that provides its inhabitants with basic needs such as water, food, energy and shelter.

The project trained teams from central and local government, universities and NGOs to train community trainers within local authorities in participatory environmental planning and management.

The project covered several towns within different ecological zones.

Each had its unique physical environmental challenges before the project, but generally the following problems occurred:

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Soil erosion, deforestation, and seepage water damaging foundations of houses.
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Lower areas and densely built up town centres had to cope with storm water floods, uncollected garbage, blocked or broken down sewerage systems and irregular water supply.
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Insufficient storm water drainage led to eroded road verges, “pot-holed” roads, flooding, stagnant pools of wastewater, uncontrolled malaria breeding sites, unsanitary and disease-prone environments, especially in slum areas and densely populated areas.
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Families had to invest disproportionate efforts and spend more of their meagre finances to cope with health issues, find cheap food, clean water and firewood from far-away places. Children living in such unsanitary environments were prone to several illnesses.
- 

In summary, the poorly managed environment was the cause of great human misery. The ongoing tragedy however was the lack of environmental management awareness, the lack of social responsibility for environmental issues and the non-existence of town-wide partnerships.



The project used a multi-entry approach, custom designed to the needs of individual towns, and was able to achieve the following:



A sense of ownership of environmental management, through successful campaigns entitled: “Make your town a green town” and “Love your town like your shamba (farm)”.



Community-level environmental action groups with mixed gender composition, supported by local institutional partnerships.



Intensive awareness raising campaign strategies, involving print (educative posters and stickers) and electronic media (radio and television programmes), participatory workshops, open public forums and real-life demonstration projects.

Currently community-level action groups supported by local institutional action groups are implementing the project. There is a gender mix across the board from the leadership to the ordinary membership of the action groups, based on personality traits such as charisma and popularity. The youth are also involved in these groups.



Different communal approaches: two examples

Since the project is being implemented with a participatory approach, the action groups in each town define their mandates and activities independently. In some cases activities are carried out jointly by the entire action group, e.g. tree planting and environmental clean-ups; in other cases, after initial community-wide mobilisation, action groups further mobilise themselves according to specific social groups (e.g. women, youth) to undertake certain activities that they feel are important. For example, in one town, the women within an action group organised themselves to manage a car washing facility. In another town, the youth mobilised themselves to work on the town’s draining and soil conservation system.

Two examples involving specific towns demonstrate such individual approaches.



Homa Bay Green Towns Project: Watershed Management

Homa Bay town, located on the shores of Lake Victoria, had a major urban watershed improved. The action group included self-organised volunteering youths who undertook soil conservation measures and planted trees uphill. They also cleaned and repaired the 1.6-km-long drain. The impact of the general clean-up in the town is already reflected in the health statistics. Figures from the district hospital serving the town indicate a reduction in the cases of environmental and water-borne diseases. The action groups thus mobilised are now initiating additional activities. In Homa Bay, the women in the action group manage a car washing facility as an income generating activity.

OI Kalou Green Towns Project: ‘Greening a town’

OI Kalou was one of the first towns to undergo ‘greening’ through tree planting. The tree planting project was conceived with the objective of forming wind breaks, stopping dust storms and improving the microclimate of the town. The council had the ambition of making the town look green but faced a few bottlenecks in the realisation of this goal. Most residents kept dairy cows, sheep and goats. They also engaged in farming and to them trees did not mean as much as other income generating activities. Also it was noted in the past that trees had been planted only to be stolen by the farmers.



Institutionalising ownership



After several consultative meetings involving the council and the residents, an action group (steering committee) was formed to co-ordinate the tree planting exercise and enforce punishment of those who destroyed trees or left them unattended. The council bought the seedlings and distributed them free to each shopkeeper who was to plant one of them in front of the shop and look after it. Also those doing gardening within the township were given trees to plant on their holdings. The council undertook to plant trees along the main highways and also to look after them.



After the oversight committee was formed, all interested parties met, drew up the rules and set fines for non-observance. Committee members included shopkeepers, cattle owners, gardeners and council officials. This allowed for checks and balances in the enforcement of the rules, with each group protecting its own interests. The rules drawn up were then presented to the council for endorsement and to give them some legal backing.



The council also facilitated good husbandry of trees by mounting an annual competition. The owner of the winning tree got a waiver of licence fees (in the case of shopkeepers) or plot rent (in the case of gardeners) that would have been payable to the council the following year.



An inspection had to be carried out at the beginning of each year before the licence fees or *shamba* (farm) rates could be renewed. Those who had not looked after their trees well enough had the renewal of their licences withheld until the tree was replanted and looked after to the satisfaction of the council.



The residents themselves imposed a fine of 100 Kshs. for each animal that was caught destroying trees or grazing on the non-grazing zones provided by the council in agreement with the interested groups. If the same animal was caught three times the owner was to be notified to remove the animal from the township.



After the greening of the town took off, the action group, led by a female chairperson, was able to mobilise the council and the business community to improve the town centre drainage system. As a result the town’s environment is sustainably well managed.

The OI Kalou Town Council as the local decision-making body was able to facilitate the institutionalisation of the decisions made by the residents of the town, by transforming them into bylaws that enabled legal sanctions. For example, the fine imposed for careless grazing of cows on tree saplings was 1.5 US\$, graduating to banishment of the cow from the town upon repeated offences. This is a case of self-regulation of environmental management at the local level. The financial incentive demonstrates that local initiatives can formulate practical strategies to achieve ecological goals.



Women ploughing with donkeys in Kenya

(by FAO)



MODULE 7

Gender Issues in SLM: Contacts and References

Overview



PROJECT COORDINATOR AND PRINCIPLE AUTHOR



CONTACTS AND REFERENCES OF MODULE 4:
A Case Study from Nicaragua



CONTACT AND REFERENCES OF MODULE 5:
Examples from India – An NGO's Perspectives



CONTACT AND REFERENCES OF MODULE 6:
Examples from Kenya – A Consultant's Perspectives



FURTHER REFERENCES:
Selection of Tools on Gender and Sustainable Land Management



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CONTACTS AND REFERENCES OF MODULE 4: A Case Study from Nicaragua



Source

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I hope they do not
refuse my bunch
of gender ideas?



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Project status: Ongoing since 1997

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Organisation: Winrock International (Nairobi Taskforce),
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The Green Towns Project

- Homa Bay Green Towns Project: Watershed Management
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