Rural Women’s Leadership Programme

Madagascar, Nepal, the Philippines and Senegal

Good practices and lessons learned
(2010-2013)
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Acronyms

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>AFA</td>
<td>Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development</td>
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<td>ANPFa</td>
<td>All Nepal Peasants’ Federation</td>
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<td>CECI</td>
<td>Centre for International Studies and Cooperation</td>
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<td>CNCR</td>
<td>National Council for Rural Consultation and Cooperation (Conseil National de Concertation et de Coopération des Ruraux)</td>
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<td>COSOP</td>
<td>country strategic opportunities programme</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
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<td>LAPA</td>
<td>local adaptation plan of action</td>
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<td>RWLP</td>
<td>Rural Women’s Leadership Programme</td>
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<td>SFOAP</td>
<td>Support to Farmers’ Organizations in Africa</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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<td>WLC</td>
<td>Women’s Leadership Circle</td>
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<td>WOCAN</td>
<td>Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture &amp; Natural Resource Management</td>
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Introduction

About this report

This report brings together the main lessons from the Rural Women’s Leadership Programme (RWLP), implemented by the Policy and Technical Advisory Division of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), with support from the Government of Norway and insights from the Farmers’ Forum in 2010 and 2012.

The purpose of this report is to:

• Highlight lessons learned
• Identify recommendations for programmes and activities that aim to strengthen rural women’s leadership
• Raise awareness about rural women’s priorities in the four countries included in RWLP and beyond.

Part One of this report presents the main lessons learned and recommendations for international and government actors, as well as for IFAD in particular. Part Two presents brief case studies from each of the countries in which RWLP was implemented.

Overview of the Rural Women’s Leadership Programme

In most developing countries, women perform a large part (and often most) of the agricultural work, and they produce most of the world’s food crops. However, their productivity, as well as the state of food security more widely, is constrained by gender-specific barriers in addition to those faced by all smallholder farmers. Without a significant investment in improving the livelihoods, assets and decision-making capacity of rural women, it is unlikely that the Millennium Development Goals to reduce hunger will be achieved.

At national and global levels, women’s voices are weak, largely because of their minimal presence in leadership roles of rural organizations, the challenges of being treated as ‘token’ women rather than equally with male leaders and, in some cases, the limited ability of the few women leaders at the national level to effectively represent the needs of women at the grass-roots level.

There is also a difference between women’s representation in women-only groups and mixed-sex groups. Women’s groups tend to be confined to the local level, often organized around economic activities. In mixed organizations, while women may be well represented as members, there are generally few in leadership positions, and this is even more the case at national and international levels. Therefore, there is a gap between women’s contribution to agricultural production, marketing and rural livelihoods, and their voice in making decisions that affect them, their livelihoods and their communities.

In response to demand from women in farmers’ organizations and in IFAD-supported Farmers’ Forums, IFAD, with support from the Government of Norway, developed a programme to strengthen the role and voice of women leaders in rural organizations, including by promoting the participation of representative farmers’ organizations in policy
dialogues. Rural organizations include community-based organizations, self-help groups, trade unions, natural resource management groups and producer organizations and their groups and federations.

RWLP is innovative in that it explicitly took on the challenge of reaching out beyond the better-educated women reached by most leadership programmes, and aimed instead to engage with women leaders at the grass-roots level. RWLP was implemented in four countries, and each country adopted a context-specific approach based on advance scoping studies.

In Nepal and the Philippines, the lead implementing partner was Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture & Natural Resource Management (WOCAN). In Madagascar, implementation was led by the Ministry of Agriculture and in Senegal, it was led by the national farmers’ organization National Council for Rural Consultation and Cooperation (Conseil National de Concertation et de Coopération des Ruraux) (CNCR).

RWLP’s goal was to increase the responsiveness of national policies, programmes and institutions to the needs and potential of rural women farmers. Specific objectives and main activities included the following:

- **Building regional/national capacity to train and mentor rural women leaders**
  - Planning meetings for national coordinators of all four pilot countries and WOCAN to determine common approaches, tools and indicators
  - Developing curricula, tools and methods adapted/adaptable to local contexts and educational level of participants
  - Training of trainers
  - Mentoring programme.

- **Preparing women members of producer organizations to be leaders and change agents in their organizations**
  - Sensitization of women leaders of producer organizations on topics including gender relations, self-awareness, leadership and accountability, negotiation and conflict management, advocacy and lobbying, communication and adult education methodology and agricultural and natural resources management policies as they affect women
  - Exchange visits to expose women at the grass-roots level to new role models
  - Mentoring and backstopping of women leaders at the grass-roots level.

- **Fostering enabling environments for gender sensitivity and women’s leadership**
  - Training and sensitization for men in producer organizations and related institutions to support rural women’s leadership.

- **Promoting the capacity for advocacy and involvement of women farmers’ organization leaders in national, regional and global policy processes**
  - Training for women leaders on advocacy tools and methods
  - Supporting the participation of representative women leaders in major regional and global policy dialogues.

- **Creating sustainable networks of women leaders to promote investments and partnerships to make agriculture more responsive to the needs of poor women farmers**
  - Supporting consultations between rural women and decision makers
  - Promoting the use of media communications to influence public perceptions of women’s economic role and women as leaders
  - Networking and building partnerships with donors and other organizations already supporting women leaders
  - Supporting rural women’s participation in global policy forums and events.

- **Assessing approaches in terms of what could be taken to scale**
  - A follow-up report.
Part One:
Lessons learned and recommendations

Lessons learned

The lessons presented here draw on RWLP, the special session on women held during the Farmers’ Forum organized by IFAD in 2010, the 2012 Farmers’ Forum and other selected projects. Lessons particular to individual countries are presented in the country case studies in Part Two.

Overall conclusions

Three overarching conclusions emerged from RWLP as a whole:

• **There is clear demand from women, especially at the grass-roots level, to have their priorities heard in farmers’ organizations** so that they can contribute more effectively to the human and economic development of their families, communities and countries. This was evidenced by the great demand for participation in RWLP training sessions, not all of which could be met. There is therefore a need to increase support for women’s leadership in farmers’ organizations.

• **Mobilizing women leaders at the grass-roots level requires a holistic approach.** The innovative aspect of RWLP was its drive to mobilize the leadership potential of women in farmers’ organizations at the grass-roots level. This requires a comprehensive approach that involves informal and women-only cooperatives; formal and national organizations and the women’s wings of those organizations focusing on mainstreaming gender into services; and developing a gender-balanced membership base.

• **RWLP is an important beginning, but because of time and budget constraints, its full potential has yet to be realized in the pilot countries and beyond.** A longer-term approach could be a solution to embedding the capacity in-country and scaling up.

Women’s economic empowerment

**Economic empowerment is a powerful entry point.** Women at the 2010 Farmers’ Forum confirmed IFAD’s experience that women’s economic empowerment paves the way for a greater voice in the home, community and formal organizations:

“**The economic empowerment of women was identified by all working groups as the essential condition to advance the voice and leadership of women in farmers’ organizations.**”

RWLP confirmed that mobilizing women to act collectively around economic activities is often a starting point for them to take on leadership roles. As women begin to contribute more to the economy of the family and community, they gain experience and

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1 IFAD, Promoting women’s leadership in farmers’ and rural producers’ organizations. 2010 Special Session of the third global meeting of the Farmers’ Forum, in conjunction with the Thirty-third Session of IFAD’s Governing Council, p. 7.
This was the case in Nepal, where RWLP enabled women to access local development funds and meet their priorities, which empowered them to take on new challenges. In the Philippines, RWLP also addressed women’s economic empowerment within PAKISAMA (the national apex farmers’ organization) and women’s organizations by providing credit and consultancy services for income-generating projects.

There is scope to bring together young people and gender interests in farmers’ organizations. Young women should be included in youth initiatives if they are not to be doubly marginalized because of their age as well as their sex.

For example, Senegal’s youth wing of the national farmers’ organization CNCR has a plan to build the capacity of 300 young men and women in leadership, advocacy and lobbying. This presents an opportunity to reach equal numbers of young women and men and to build an understanding of gender equality and different leadership styles.

Equal voice and decision-making
Creating institutional space for women takes time. Any kind of institutional change takes time. This is true for attempts to gain more voice for women’s priorities in male-dominated farmers’ organizations. It is well known that “...many leadership training programmes fall short of their goals because when women return to their producer groups they are underrepresented in decision-making roles, and the organizational culture favours a leadership style more often associated by aggressive and masculine tendencies.” This implies that in addition to building the capacities of women themselves, programmes must support institutions to change, modify their perception of leadership and value women’s contributions. This is a long-term undertaking and especially challenging for large, established formal structures, which have emerged as male-dominated organizations.

• Gender mainstreaming plans, which have been adopted by some farmers’ organizations, offer a possible entry point for making these organizations more welcoming of women and representative of their priorities. For example, in Senegal, RWLP supported the inclusion of gender issues into the strategic plan of CNCR (2011-2015). Similarly, in the Philippines, RWLP helped to revitalize a gender and development programme, which had been developed earlier but had lost momentum during a leadership crisis. Currently, Support to Farmers’ Organizations in Africa (SFOAP), with help from the European Commission and IFAD, will be drawing on RWLP experience and providing support to apex organizations in Africa to develop and implement gender mainstreaming plans.

Farmers’ organizations need to attract more women members. As expressed by Tom Anyonge, Senior Technical Adviser at IFAD, “…there needs to be a very strong base of women’s membership at the grass-roots level. Only when there is this critical mass at the level of farmers’ organizations, can they put women in office. The membership base needs to be galvanized.”

This was a focus of RWLP in Madagascar, which launched a comprehensive drive to reach out and expand the membership base of women.

• Quotas may need to be introduced in the face of entrenched gender inequalities to complement bottom-up collective action by women. Quotas are

The RWLP experience shows that gains in women’s leadership need to be supported over a reasonable period of time if they are to effectively change power inequalities established over many years. However, the duration of RWLP was too short to support sustained policy, organizational and behavioural change.

What are the benefits of participating in women-only groups or mixed groups? In some contexts, women prefer to operate through women-only groups, while in others, they are participating effectively in mixed and often male-dominated national-level farmers’ organizations. Women’s wings or committees, often established within mixed groups, can safeguard women’s interests and funding, but they can also sometimes deepen the marginalization of women from the main business of the farmers’ organization. Recent research by Oxfam points to greater benefits for women who join multiple groups, but that it is normally for better-off women who have the possibility to join more formalized structures. Also, the economic benefits may be greater for women when they join mixed groups because they have more resources. However, research also confirms that women’s membership in women-only groups helps them to develop the skills and confidence to participate in mixed groups. In other words, grass-roots women’s groups may provide an effective pathway for poorer women in particular to build experience before taking on a more active role in mixed organizations.

In the Philippines, RWLP focused on women’s integration into the national farmers’ organization, while in Madagascar and Senegal, the initiatives were mainly through the women’s wings of the national organizations. In Nepal, the programme focused mostly on women-only groups at local level. These different approaches reflect different enabling frameworks.

Formal and informal groups are important. RWLP supported a mix of collective-action mechanisms for rural women, including national and formalized

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4 Esther A. Penunia, The Role of Farmers’ Organizations in Empowering and Promoting the Leadership of Rural Women, p. 6.

Senegal

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farmers’ organizations (e.g. Senegal) and less formal groups (e.g. Nepal). Overall, women participants in all four countries reported that they had benefited from collective action, although no one kind of group emerged as being preferred over another. This confirms IFAD’s experience in other contexts – that participating in collective action brings concrete and financial benefits to women, and that programmes need to give space for different kinds of groups according to women’s needs and the broader context.

Women’s leadership in farmers’ organizations can be scaled up – but there is no ‘magic bullet’. Gender roles, relationships and enabling frameworks vary across contexts and over time, and the precise mix of approaches should be determined at the national and local levels. Key entry points are local public, private and social organizations because they can leverage the change triggered by RWLP and similar programmes. Approaches should be revisited over the life of projects so that successes can be sustained and support can be adapted as institutions evolve.

The pilot countries of RWLP adopted different approaches based on local contexts, which were researched in advance.

Working at the household level is critical in order to bring about behavioural change in one of society’s most fundamental and influential institutions. Without this, women may find that their household roles may not enable them to fulfil their potential at the community level and in farmers’ organizations.

In Nepal, one woman from Sindhuli said, “I remember there was one woman whose husband beat her for going to adult literacy classes. But today her husband is the one who reminds her to go to community meetings. I have seen plenty of examples to prove that change is possible.”

Women’s leadership requires a mix of skills. RWLP allowed each country to develop appropriate approaches, which included training in a mix of leadership and negotiation skills, developing technical knowledge (e.g. about new crop varieties) and providing support for entrepreneurial and market-access activities. It is important not to assume that women’s leadership is only about building women’s confidence and leadership skills, but rather to consider whether other knowledge or skills may be needed.

In Senegal, for example, RWLP participants joined in the development of local cereals with the French non-governmental organization (NGO) Solidarités International and capacity-building areas identified by CNCR’s College of Women (Collège des femmes) included innovative microenterprise and functional literacy.

Women’s voices must be heard by policymakers in order to ensure that their priorities are taken into account more widely in national and local rural development. Despite the fact that rural women contribute significantly to rural processing and marketing activities across the world, their decision-making and access to profits diminishes as these activities become more commercialized and politicized. Policy advocacy is therefore needed to make development more equitable in farmers’ organizations. This advocacy is needed at all levels – local, national and international.

In Senegal, raising public awareness of women’s role in agriculture was a key objective. Activities included:

• Participation of CNCR in the opening march of the World Social Forum in Dakar (2011)
• A one-day sensitization workshop for male leaders about the role and situation of women in farmers’ organizations (2011)
• Training for rural women leaders in communication and advocacy (2012)
• Media broadcasts about women’s role in agriculture and producer organizations (2012).

This generated considerable momentum; although there was no time to follow through with policy dialogue, other actors are well placed to do so.
In Nepal, RWLP supported a three-day conference on ‘Gender & Climate Change’, where policymakers and practitioners were invited to interact with women leaders from the grass-roots level from HIMAWANTI and ASTHA, two major women’s organizations. WOCAN’s ‘Women’s Leadership Circles’ is another possible model (see Box 2).

At the global level, RWLP participants from the four countries also had the opportunity to take part in policy processes such as: the World Food Summit; the Civil Society Organization consultation workshop on the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP); the tenth, fifteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Conference of the Parties (COP) – Convention on Biological Diversity; the IFAD Farmers’ Forum in 2010; and the launch of the joint programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in New York at the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2012.

Networking among women builds their confidence and generates ideas. The participants in Nepal reported an increased sense of solidarity. RWLP participants from Senegal and Madagascar expressed satisfaction with being able to exchange ideas with each other at south-south events.

Engaging men is essential. Gender equality is about both men and women. In many contexts, it is important to work with men in order to build understanding, acceptance and even advocacy for women’s potential contribution to farmers’ organizations and through collective action.

Senegal’s workshop to sensitize men is one example of how this can be done. Also, in Nepal, men were involved from the start in RWLP activities to ensure lasting change and build acceptance of women leaders in a patriarchal society. For example, some trainings for farmers’ organizations established that 25-30 per cent of participants should be men, and a small group of men were formed into an informal network to support women’s leadership.

Programming and project management

Initiatives such as RWLP work best when linked with other projects. In order to boost its impact and the chances of uptake upon completion, RWLP, like grants and other cross-cutting initiatives, needed to be linked as much as possible with projects supported by IFAD or others.

For example, RWLP in Madagascar built on a tradition of working with farmers’ organizations, and RWLP events involved participants from existing projects.

Recommendations

This section provides practical guidance for strengthening women’s leadership in farmers’ organizations in IFAD’s projects and programmes. The recommendations are drawn from evidence-based good practices and lessons from RWLP.

Women’s economic empowerment

Support women’s economic empowerment is an end in itself, as well as an important entry point for empowering women to gain greater influence in their homes, communities and farmers’ organizations. Projects supporting value-addition and market access should take active measures to counteract women’s frequently inequitable participation in the opportunities that these projects bring. Such measures can include supporting women’s leadership in mixed organizations as well as strengthening women’s self-help groups to gain access to credit and community funds that finance women’s priorities.

Target young women in youth entrepreneurship initiatives. Some farmers’ organizations have a youth wing as well as a women’s wing. Bringing together the youth and gender agendas of farmers’ organizations can help to mobilize young women leaders to build farmers’ organizations that support their inclusion and economic empowerment through relevant services.
Equal voice and decision-making

Adopt a long-term approach. Whether working with women-only organizations or mixed organizations, creating individual and institutional capacity takes time. Projects should be part of a programme approach and linked to other projects to create longer-term momentum.

Create opportunities for rural women to participate in mixed and women-only farmers’ organizations and in both formal and informal ones. Group participation provides women with self-confidence, enhanced skills and improved access to productive resources (e.g. land and capital) and services (e.g. entrepreneurial skills training). Women-only groups can be an important entry point for encouraging women to identify strategies to protect their unique knowledge and skills from being exploited as markets become more commercial. Women often feel more comfortable, confident and safe in women-only groups where there is a tacit shared understanding, but it is also important to strengthen women’s active participation in more formalized mixed cooperatives. Women-only groups may be a more appropriate vehicle to engage poorer women, whereas those already in mixed farmers’ organizations could be supported to take a more active role. Projects should try to support women in sharing their experience in different kinds of farmers’ organizations, and strengthen pathways from women-only to mixed farmers’ organizations.

In mixed farmers’ organizations, facilitate women’s increased representation and strengthen gender relations. Gender parity can be achieved by increasing women’s representation through recruitment drives and graduated membership fees. A critical mass of women members can then be supported to articulate their needs more effectively, and potential women leaders can be supported with leadership skills and technical training – ensuring that participants have an outlet to immediately put their learning to practical use. Minimum quotas should be considered where there is persistent inequality in gender balance, complemented by aspirational targets to ensure the quotas do not inadvertently end up as a glass ceiling. Gender mainstreaming plans are important entry points towards strengthening gender relations; support should be given to farmers’ organizations to develop and implement these, based on needs expressed by women members and potential members.

**BOX 2**

**Advocating for integration of gender concerns into climate change**

On 18-20 February 2013, WOCAN hosted a Global Meeting of the Women’s Leadership Circles (WLCs) in Nairobi, Kenya. Women’s Leadership Circles, organized by WOCAN at the national level, provide a space where women farmers and policymakers meet regularly as part of the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders in Agriculture. The meeting focused on climate change, providing a platform of dialogue where grass-roots women could share concerns, opinions and inputs with other women at policymaking level.

In addition, the WOCAN-hosted breakfast meeting for the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for Environment (NWMLE) provided a unique opportunity for the women farmers and decision makers from Nepal, South Africa, the Maldives and Kenya to share their issues with NWMLE members and to discuss points that could be raised in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council meetings.

Ensure the approach is suitable for the context. Gender roles vary in specific contexts and change over time. Therefore, successful practices adopted from elsewhere need to be locally tested and adapted.

Support behavioural change in the home to unlock women’s leadership potential outside it. Women in each of the four countries of RWLP cited sociocultural barriers as the root of their problems in gaining voice in farmers’ organizations. Women are held back by limited mobility; social norms casting them in caring rather than in leadership roles; and heavy workloads. Consider using gender-transformative household methodologies to tackle these issues, and to engage men and women in decision-making in households. Highlighting the economic benefits for the household and community can be an effective approach.

Ensure that women’s leadership courses include an appropriate mix of skills. The key components of the notion of leadership need to be identified and leadership programmes should include relevant technical and behavioural skills prioritized by participants.

Support more enabling policy frameworks at the national and local levels. An example of this would be to ensure that national and local government, rural development councils and others are aware of the importance of women’s role in agriculture and of women’s voices in decision-making processes. Specifically, projects could provide for policy dialogues and sensitization around the importance of women’s equal representation in farmers’ organizations and how to go about achieving this in terms of policy formulation and budgeting processes. International Women’s Day is a potential focus for such efforts. Women should be part of these policy dialogues and projects could also include measures to support dialogue among women at regional, national and grass-roots levels.

Promote south-south learning. Projects should promote sharing experience among decision makers, especially women, in farmers’ organizations from different countries. For example, the participation of RWLP participants in Senegal was greatly appreciated in Madagascar, highlighting a demand for south-south learning. Learning routes around women’s leadership in farmers’ organizations could also be explored.

Engage men. If projects are to support lasting improvements in women’s participation in farmers’ organizations, it is important to engage with men as well as women. Strategies include sensitizing men – including male leaders of farmers’ organizations, local government and households – on the economic and social benefits of mobilizing women. These strategies can eventually support improved gender relations in various institutions, including the home.

Equitable workloads
Ensure that efforts to increase women’s decision-making in farmers’ organizations and other forms of collective action are supported with measures to reduce their workload. Women’s disproportionate workload in many contexts means that even if they are interested, they are simply unable to take up opportunities for collective action. Women typically have strong roles in processing and marketing, yet they also have limited mobility and growing workloads in many contexts because of the effects of climate change. Projects supporting value chains and market access could consider funding locally accessible, easily maintained labour-saving processing and packaging technologies. Good quality and affordable local health care can also significantly reduce women’s care burden for the young and sick, thus freeing up time for active participation in community affairs and farmers’ organizations.

Programming and project management
Consider the following operational suggestions for strengthening women’s leadership in farmers’ organizations:
- Include women’s leadership in farmers’ organizations as an explicit objective
or outcome, encompassing the
dimensions of both **representation**
(i.e. gender balance in membership and
leadership) as well as **empowerment**
(i.e. equal voice in decision-making and
access to benefits).

- Analyse the status of and opportunities
for women’s participation in farmers’
or organizations, ideally mapping the
gender profile and experience of mixed
organizations and women-only
organizations. This mapping should
identify male and female potential
advocates and supporters, as well as
organizations able to provide local
capacity-building. It should also include
other projects and initiatives of IFAD
and others which could be built upon.
IFAD should ensure that RWLP pilot
countries build on and scale out
RWLP achievements, so as not to lose
momentum and to tap into a cohort of
recently trained people. This can be done
at both a project and a programme level.
For example, the new country strategic
opportunities programme (COSOP) in
**Nepal** explicitly foresees doing so.

- Focus on women-only organizations as
well as mixed farmers’ organizations
which have a gender mainstreaming
plan and/or women’s wings or are keen
to develop one.

- Include an appropriate mix of
mechanisms and activities. For example,
quotas, capacity-building for women
and sensitization may be necessary for
large mixed farmers’ organizations,
whereas women-only organizations may
need access to credit and advocacy
support. Within a project, this could
mean including ‘mainstreaming’ gender
equity considerations in any activities to
support farmers’ organizations, as well
as earmarking some project activities to
support women only. This does include
engaging with men; indeed, as the
example from **Nepal** shows, this is
central to success.

- When preparing country programmes,
consider grants directly to women’s
farmers’ organizations or to women’s
wings within national apex
organizations – similar to RWLP. Such
grants may be especially appropriate to
kick-start momentum, although it is also
important to plan for the eventual
uptake and integration of new capacities
more widely into country programmes
and local institutions.

- Allocate a dedicated budget to primarily
benefit women members of farmers’
or organizations, but which could also be
used to influence decision makers.

- Take a longer-term approach, and do
not stop at the ‘quick wins’ – change
takes time. Over the life of projects and
programmes, sequence activities to
enable organizations to evolve and
individuals to develop. Consider
supporting pathways for women to
move from informal women-only
organizations to more formalized and
male-dominated farmers’ organizations
at the regional and national levels.

- Adapt approaches to address change or
to tackle entrenched inequalities. Allow
flexibility to fine-tune approaches and
allow women time to gain confidence,
articulate their priorities and take
advantage of opportunities and new
initiatives. For example, in **Senegal**
with RWLP, a number of achievements (e.g.
injecting gender concerns into CNCR’s
national strategy) were not originally
foreseen but eventually strengthened the
overall result.
• Embed relevant indicators in the logical framework, as well as in the monitoring and evaluation framework. This includes checking on progress, success factors and lessons during supervision missions and mid-term reviews, as well as at project and programme completion.

Scaling up RWLP in IFAD
Some IFAD projects and programmes already apply ideas and mechanisms to strengthen women’s presence and voice in farmers’ organizations; however, there is room to scale up IFAD’s engagement. The following are IFAD-specific options for scaling up the approaches and opportunities arising from RWLP:

• Embed and take RWLP to scale in the four pilot countries: Madagascar, Nepal, the Philippines and Senegal. IFAD should take concrete steps to share findings and lessons learned from this pilot programme to inform project design and, critically, COSOPs, in each of the four RWLP pilot countries to maintain momentum and build on the achievements, including a cohort of trained people. This has happened in the case of Nepal, where RWLP features in the new COSOP.

• Take concrete steps to scale up the social and human capital, as well as the practical tools generated, through the joint programme to Accelerate Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women. This joint programme among the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), IFAD, UN Women and the World Food Programme (WFP) is being implemented initially in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda. South-south learning between RWLP pilot countries and the joint programme countries could be encouraged. This idea could be tested at a follow-up special side-event in the 2014 Farmers’ Forum at IFAD for representatives from the joint programme, RWLP and SFOAP countries.

• Continue to seek opportunities for linking RWLP and SFOAP. At the national and international levels, SFOAP’s focus on apex organizations could be mobilized to stimulate and support national farmers’ organizations to put in place gender-sensitive policies and membership services.

• Organize a side-event coinciding with the Farmers’ Forum 2014, to disseminate findings and stimulate further debate on how to strengthen women’s leadership in these institutions. A special focus could be placed on mobilizing young women’s leadership and income-generating capacities through farmers’ organizations, given that in 2012 there was a special session on youth and that 2014 is the International Year of Family Farming.

• Consider a regional mechanism to mainstream gender into national farmers’ organizations. Although a number of countries have supportive policies and structures in place, women leaders and women’s wings often lack a strong voice. Supporting stronger links with regional and apex organizations and south-south learning can help to create the enabling environment that is often missing and that could give women the confidence to speak up.

• Seek linkages with other relevant initiatives and projects. Examples of these include the following:

- The World Agroforestry Centre (ICRISAT) and IFAD project Enabling Rural Transformation and Grassroots Institutional Building for Sustainable Land Management and Increased Incomes and Food Security, which aims to develop a model for

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6 Note that the joint programme was informed by RWLP.
BOX 3
What women want – increasing presence and influence in farmers’ organizations

RWLP participants substantively contributed to defining the following strategies to promote women's leadership within farmers’ organizations:

- Ensure equitable access to productive resources
- Establish quotas for women's participation in the membership and leadership mechanisms of mixed farmers’ organizations
- Establish women-only committees
- Aim for longer-term institutional change
- Ensure that capacity-building and training are based on needs identified by women farmers.

Source: Adapted from the Special Session of the third global meeting of the Farmers’ Forum in conjunction with the Thirty-third Session of IFAD’s Governing Council on Promoting women’s leadership in farmers’ and rural producers’ organizations (IFAD 2010).

Conclusions

RWLP confirmed that there is a need to address the lack of strong women’s voices in a range of farmers’ organizations. This will require a multi-pronged long-term approach, and IFAD will intensify its efforts to identify entry points. Box 4 presents some questions to consider when designing programmes.

strengthening grass-roots institutions for effective engagement in policy processes that enable poor rural households to aggregate, mobilize and access rural services.

- Feature RWLP and its key points in the IFAD project design aids, such as the IFAD Toolkit for Institutional and Organizational Analysis and the Gender and Targeting Toolkit.
- Translate and upload important documents on key websites. Documents – such as the training manuals developed in French and Malagasy, and CNCR’s strategy as an example of where gender has been mainstreamed into the national farmers’ organization – should be shared widely through specialist online forums.

These recommendations all confirm the priorities and needs expressed by women at the IFAD-hosted Farmers’ Forum in 2010 (see Box 3).
BOX 4

Questions to assess support for women’s leadership in farmers’ organizations

Policy
Are there enabling policies at the national and/or subnational level?
- If so, what are the entry points for programmes to ensure their implementation in practice?
- If not, how can projects support policy advocacy (e.g. by showcasing successful examples from other contexts or by facilitating women’s voices to be heard)?

Farmers’ organizations
Should the programme support women-only or mixed organizations? This will depend on the local context and a combination of the two is also possible; attention should be paid to creating pathways between the two.

Are there women-only organizations and/or women’s wings in place?
- If so, how can projects support pathways between these and mixed organizations (e.g. by identifying and supporting high-potential women to play a more active role)?
- If not, is there a need to support these in order to create an enabling space for women to develop their skills and confidence? How could this best be done?

In mixed organizations, are there enabling policies in place? These could include gender mainstreaming strategies and budgets, minimum participation quotas and aspirational targets for membership and leadership levels and outcomes (e.g. gender-responsive services).
- If so, are they working or is there scope to refresh them? This could be done by asking women and men in the farmers’ organization to identify what works as well as any ideas for progress. Again, successful strategies from other contexts could be presented for possible adaptation.
- If not, what is the most effective way to establish these?

Are there effective procedures and resources in place to support policies?
- If so, what could be scaled out to other locations in the country, or scaled up to a national or regional level? How can good practices be leveraged to influence further progress?
- If not, how can projects support the implementation of policies? This can be tackled through a wide range of strategies ranging from membership recruitment drives to ensure a critical mass of women, to capacity-building and sensitization of women and men members and leaders. Support may also be needed to ensure that budgets and monitoring procedures reflect gender goals. Strategies should reflect the fact that institutions are composed of people, and that profound behavioural change is likely to require an approach that touches people’s values and emotions as well as their rational side. This approach can also be effective in addressing conflicts that arise when gender roles are challenged in traditional societies.

The household
Is there a need to back up efforts in farmers’ organizations with support in the home?
Support at the household level can be the key to transforming gender relations and overcoming gender barriers in the home that are holding back women’s leadership potential in the community and in farmers’ organizations.
This section presents each of the country case studies, including lessons learned and recommendations at the national level. Box 5 below gives an overview of the distinct features of the four RWLP case study countries.

**Madagascar**

**Background and context**

In Madagascar, rural women represent 53 per cent of the agricultural population. They are responsible for producing 80 per cent of food crops and are in charge of nearly 90 per cent of agricultural processing activities; rural women therefore play a key role in ensuring food security and contribute to increased rural incomes. Women in Madagascar are slowly gaining economic power but are still often unaware of their options and potential.

There is a disparity between women’s important role in society and their level of influence; they have limited presence in leadership roles in farmers’ organizations and the few women leaders at the national level have limited ability to represent the interests of rural women at the grass-roots level.\(^7\)

Women’s rights are recognized in the Constitution, but socio-economic barriers block the implementation of those rights at times. Women face constraints in the family, community and professional activities. They are poorly represented and have little voice in critical decision-making domains, such as politics and farmers’ organizations.\(^8\)

When RWLP was established, the Government’s gender unit was based in the Ministry of Health, Family Planning and Social Protection, and was mainly dependent on donor funding. Gender focal points had been set up in various ministries, a gender network had been created (including government organizations and NGOs) and a Gender Observatory had been established to promote gender equality.

There were two apex rural women’s organizations: the Federation of the Rural Women of Madagascar (FVTM) and the Committee for the Coordination of Women’s Associations and NGOs in Madagascar (DRV). FVTM was a member of the Confédération des Agriculteurs Malagasy (FEKRITAMA), which was established in 1988 with regional representation. Thirty per cent of FEKRITAMA’s central management group is women. FEKRITAMA is itself a member of the Coalition Paysanne de Madagascar (CPM) or the Coalition of Farmers’ Organizations, which has established a Women’s Commission.

Rural women in Madagascar, as in other countries, are generally poorly represented in mixed organizations, and women-only organizations lack resources and influence. However, women are actively involved in IFAD-supported programmes and participate in activities related to microcredit, marketing and community development. In line with national policy, the development of farmers’ organizations is an important part of IFAD’s...
In 2006, IFAD provided support for institutional strengthening of the CPM platform. IFAD’s current COSOP was developed with direct input from farmers’ organizations, which expressed a need for capacity development to professionalize activities. The Upper Mandraré Basin Development Project (PHBM) engaged facilitators to work with men to explain the advantages of engaging with women, which resulted in a greater appreciation of women’s contribution. RWLP aimed to build on this experience and strengthen the role of rural women in farmers’ organizations.

An important feature of RWLP in Madagascar was the strong link with existing projects, which was considered key to the sustainability of RWLP. These other projects included the Support to Farmers’ Professional Organizations and Agricultural Services Project (AROPA) and the Support Programme for Rural Microenterprise Poles and Regional Economies (PROSPERER), which aim to have half of their beneficiaries be women-headed businesses that receive support to grow their microenterprises.

**Goals and objectives**

The overall goal of RWLP in Madagascar was to combat rural poverty and food insecurity by strengthening the competence, representation and influence of rural women within farmers’ organizations to improve their social, economic and professional status. Beneficiaries were women from farmers’ organizations, including from IFAD-supported projects.

RWLP was implemented for more than 1½ years in 6 regions, in 24 rural districts (out of a total of 107) and 51 rural
communes (out of about 1,395). The programme was implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture’s Coordination Department with a budget of US$150,000.

Specific objectives were to:

- Promote increased membership and representation in decision-making within farmers’ organizations.
- Strengthen the capacities and competence of rural women and their organizations through improved working conditions and appropriate support services to enable them to become effective advocates.
- Engage rural women and farmers’ organizations in policy dialogues on rural development at the national and local levels, including through networking between grass-roots women’s organizations and apex organizations.

Main activities

Activities were implemented in the following areas:

Improving representation and the voice of rural women in farmers’ organizations

- Research was conducted on women leaders in farmers’ organizations, focusing on experiences in IFAD-funded projects.
- An information and advocacy campaign was implemented.
- Rural women leaders’ representatives participated in the Farmers’ Forum.

Strengthening women’s capacity

- Specialized national trainers conducted training for trainers (five days for 20 trainees, including government and project gender specialists, gender network members and others).
- Pilot training using new tools and approaches was offered for two to three days for rural women leaders from the four IFAD-supported programmes and two other associations selected by the apex organizations.
- Training materials were developed based on the pilot training and including locally relevant case studies.

Engaging rural women and farmers’ organizations in policy dialogues – see activities under ‘Improving representation and the voice of rural women in farmers’ organizations’ above.

Providing programme implementation support

- Institutional strengthening was provided for women’s departments in key government institutions (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture), the Gender Network and women’s apex organizations to enable them to implement RWLP and similar programmes.
- Programme management was provided.

Achievements

The Ministry of Agriculture’s final programme report is comprehensive and includes the following observations about RWLP’s achievements:

- The research allowed the Ministry of Agriculture to analyse key issues relating to women’s representation in farmers’ organizations. The research results were collected into two volumes: the first volume focused on women’s leadership, the factors and conditions influencing rural women’s leadership and possible actions to strengthen this. The proposed actions include: (i) individual empowerment of rural women; (ii) gender mainstreaming into institutions and programmes; (iii) support for women’s organizations as key vehicles to make rural women’s voice more influential; and (iv) promotion of women’s greater influence and voice within existing (male-dominated) institutions. The second
volume focused more on women’s empowerment issues in the regions of Vakinankaratra, Haute Matsiatra, Atsinanana and Vatovavy Fitovinany.

• There was a noticeable improvement in participants’ understanding of the gender dimensions of rural development. There was also increased understanding about the gaps between policies and their application because of entrenched sociocultural stereotypes in rural communities and farmers’ organizations. The Ministry of Agriculture took part for the first time in this kind of activity, and its capacity was greatly strengthened.

• The programme supported the organization of the International Day of Rural Women for two years, and over 100 rural women took part. The advocacy dimension was supported by workshops on issues such as new rice varieties and how to set up and run an agribusiness.

• Fourteen journalists were trained from different media. This training was effective in sensitizing the press on fundamental concepts, such as that gender equality does not mean that men and women are the same, but that the goal is to aim for equality while taking into account the different priorities of women and men. The programme enjoyed considerable visibility as a result of the advocacy focus and media support.

• A cohort of trainers was established in key issues relating to gender and rural development. Twenty trainers were trained (13 women and 7 men) by five trainers over five days. Topics included leadership and management concepts (e.g. good governance) and adult teaching methodologies (andragogy).

• WOCAN organized a training workshop on ‘Rural Women’s Leadership’, which was attended by IFAD representatives and RWLP participants from Senegal. The workshop aimed to enable participants to understand the impact of gender and leadership in communities and organizations, develop related skills and undertake some planning of future activities (January 2011).

• A total of 57 women were trained in leadership and management techniques, which is more than the 40 originally planned. A total of 14 sessions, each lasting between two and four days, were organized (March to July 2011).

• Various training tools were developed. The final product was a binder with modules in Malagasy covering 4 main themes and 24 tools in the areas of gender and development, personal development, leadership and farmers’ organizations and adult training methodologies. Copies of these manuals were shared with rural women’s leaders and with IFAD programme managers and partners.

• Exchange visits promoted south-south learning and networking, boosting women’s self-confidence. These included visits between RWLP participating locations in Madagascar, a visit from RWLP participants in Senegal and participation in two IFAD Farmers’ Forums in 2010 and 2012.

**Challenges**

RWLP experienced the following challenges:

• There was a lack of political will, coupled with a lack of understanding about basic gender concepts among rural women and key decision makers in farmers’ organizations.

• Delays in project start-up caused some operational challenges.

• Sustainability of project achievements is a challenge given the entrenched gender roles and modest intervention of RWLP. Efforts should be made by IFAD and partners to scale up the achievements, including by drawing on the pool of trained women leaders and training materials.
Lessons learned

• International Day of Rural Women on 15 October is mainly celebrated at the national level without significant engagement at the grass-roots level. This is a missed opportunity for what could be an important entry point for advocacy activities with rural community leaders.

• Training for rural women leaders should be carried out at the district level to achieve greater impact. Participants in RWLP training recognized the impact of the programme; however, to effectively integrate the training of rural women leaders into the activity plans of farmer associations requires an analysis of these associations and a sensitization campaign over time, rather than one-off and ad hoc activities. Follow-up activities after training sessions are essential to promote sustainability and keep up the momentum.

• Gender mainstreaming is a process which goes far beyond producing sex-disaggregated data, according to findings from the research component of RWLP. The goal is to consider the different needs of the whole population, which is not possible without a gender-sensitive approach. Moreover, women’s leadership is not achievable without a supportive policy environment and coherent strategies that mainstream gender concerns into institutions, programmes and projects. Building the concept of ‘rural women leaders’ requires a complete review and transformation of the mission, structure, activities and processes of key institutions and their organizations. This, in turn, requires sensitization at the personal and household level, before any other institutions can be tackled.

• Both decision makers and rural women at the grass-roots level need to be targeted by activities to ensure sustainability of programme achievements. However, attention should be paid to ensuring that maximum benefits are felt by women at the grass-roots level.

• Increasing the voice of women in mixed organizations is as important as strengthening women-only organizations. The goal of strengthening rural women’s leadership has a number of entry points, including strengthening women’s voice and representation in mixed organizations as well as strengthening women’s farmers’ organizations at the grass-roots level. The appropriate strategy depends on the context, and indeed a mix of approaches is likely to be needed.

• South-south learning experiences are important. RWLP participants in Madagascar greatly appreciated the opportunity to share experiences with RWLP participants in Senegal, highlighting a demand for south-south learning. Learning routes around women’s leadership in farmers’ organizations could also be explored.

Recommendations

The main recommendations for IFAD and national/international partners from the RWLP experience in Madagascar are as follows:

• Continue to advocate for the voice of rural women and celebrate International Women’s Day alongside capacity-building activities.

• Ensure that stand-alone initiatives to support women’s voice in farmers’ organizations are firmly linked with existing projects to promote greater uptake at the end.
• Provide direct support, including learning exchanges and support for economic empowerment, to women’s organizations.
• Work with national farmers’ organizations to develop gender mainstreaming plans.
• Support the capacities of the Ministry of Agriculture and national/local gender institutions to carry out the above activities.
• Share this case study with IFAD and relevant national partners so that it can be used and applied in related projects.
• Find ways to scale up key aspects of RWLP in Madagascar, especially the core group of trained women and the training materials.

Goals and objectives

In support of College priorities, RWLP in Senegal aimed to strengthen rural women’s capacities to express their needs and priorities, increase their presence in leadership and decision-making positions and improve their managerial skills.

RWLP in Senegal had three objectives:
• Improve the capacities of women in producer organizations in leadership and negotiation.
• Improve women’s capacities in governance.
• Raise public awareness about women’s role in agriculture.

Main activities

The pilot programme was implemented by CNCR over two years and focused on two rural communities (Koul-Thiès and Ogo-Matam). The main activities were as follows:

Improving the capacities of women in farmers’ organizations in leadership, negotiation and governance

• Women participated in a workshop in Madagascar on rural women’s leadership (2011).
• A validation workshop was conducted for the training modules which had been proposed by the consultant (2011).
• Core trainers were trained (2011).
• A refresher training for core trainers was conducted because of delays in project start-up (2012).
• Cascade training was offered to grassroots women leaders in two locations (Koul and Ogo) (2012).

Senegal
Background and context

The presence of women in decision-making positions in producer organizations in Senegal remains low. A 2007 report noted that only 20 per cent of local platforms of farmers’ organization presidents were women and that there were no women at the regional level.⁹

The situation is the same at the national level. Women’s lack of access to decision-making in farmers’ organizations has led to the development of a number of women-only rural farmers’ organizations, as well as the establishment of women’s wings in mixed organizations such as CNCR. The creation of the women’s wing in CNCR (College of Women or Collège des femmes) was supported by the Network of Farmers’ Organizations and Agricultural Producers in West Africa (Réseau des organisations paysannes et de producteurs de l’Afrique de l’Ouest – ROPPA) in order to increase women’s participation. The College developed a three-year plan to improve skills in women’s professional activities and to promote their participation in apex farmer associations.

Raising public awareness of women’s role in agriculture

- A one-day sensitization workshop was offered for male leaders, organized on the annual mobilization/sensitization day about the role and situation of women in producer organizations (2011).
- Training was provided in communication and advocacy.
- Media broadcasts were disseminated on women’s role in agriculture and producer organizations (2012).

The following additional activities addressed programme management, analysis and other needs (activities marked with an asterisk* were not in the original plan)

- A project start-up meeting was held with the College.
- A participatory organizational analysis was developed and the action plan of the College was updated (2011).*
- Local cereals were developed with the French NGO Solidarités International (2011).*
- Participation in national-level sector round-table dialogues under the ‘Uniterra’ programme of the Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI). The CNCR RWLP coordinator was introduced at the first sector round table, and she introduced RWLP. The second round table focused on gender mainstreaming in Uniterra partners’ programmes and projects (2011).*
- Participation in gender equality training with two Canadian NGOs: CECI and the Service d’assistance canadienne aux organismes (SACO) (2011).*
- Gender issues were included in CNCR’s strategic plan (2011-2015).*
- The following projects were identified for member organizations of the College, and concept notes were developed for the first three:
  - Innovative microenterprise
  - Establishment and strengthening of community centres
  - Action research
  - Improvement of living conditions of insecure and poor households
  - Functional literacy
  - Establishment and strengthening of a youth wing (College of Youth or Collège des Jeunes)
  - Training in communication and advocacy.
- Meetings were held with relevant partners.

Achievements

The CNCR organized an evaluation workshop in July 2012, and participants included members from the office of the College and some core trainers. Officers from the newly established College of Youth were also invited so that they could learn from the experience of the College of Women. The evaluation identified the following achievements:

- The programme trained 23 trainers, who in turn trained 50 members of grassroots producer organizations. These members are now in a position to apply what they have learned within the farmers’ organizations which supported their participation.
- The training methodology for core trainers was very relevant and provided a good foundation for the core trainers to develop additional modules. The materials were felt to be useful for subsequent scaling up.
- The programme strengthened the solidarity between members of CNCR and the women’s wings of member organizations.
- The capacity of participants in the women’s wings of CNCR member organizations was felt to have been significantly strengthened.
- Local participants in Ogo and Koul greatly appreciated the training and participatory approach.
**BOX 6**

**Scaling up and out from Senegal**

Four main outputs of RWLP have potential for scaling up in Senegal and beyond.

- The College’s updated plan and its gender dimensions offer both policy and programming entry points to scale up support to reduce the gender gap in participation and influence in producer organizations.
- The training manuals and participant workbooks in French could be adapted for use in similar initiatives. However, these should ideally be translated into local languages for maximum impact.
- The concept notes for action research, microenterprise and support of community centres merit support because they are initiatives generated by women in grass-roots organizations, rather than top-down initiatives.
- The core trainers, the participants in the cascade training and the male leader participants in the gender-sensitization workshop could form a resource and reference group for similar initiatives. However, some refresher support would be necessary.

- The local workshops helped to identify participants with the potential to become future core local trainers.
- The participants’ enthusiasm and commitment were critical factors for the success of the training and the whole programme.
- Women reported that they were better able to express their needs and priorities as a result of RWLP.

**Challenges**

- Due to delays in project start-up, activities on the ground effectively started in January 2011, after the project coordinator and another woman leader joined the train-the-trainer workshops organized in Madagascar.
- CNCR requested an extension because of the delays; however, IFAD was obliged, under current rules governing grant administration, to close down the agreement with an overall expenditure of a little more than half of the originally agreed US$150,000. Since the training of trainers had been completed but the cascade training had not been, IFAD made a significant effort to ensure that major planned activities were completed and intended project results were achieved. This was done by using US$71,137 returned funds under a different contractual agreement that would involve IFAD’s country office in Dakar (and specifically the regional gender coordinator based in Dakar, also cofinanced by Norway in an oversight role). This complementary initiative obliged IFAD to request an extension to the overall agreement, which was granted. The delays led to a loss of momentum, which resulted in the need for a campaign to remobilize key actors in 2012.
• Some activities were not implemented as planned (e.g. the concept notes for the planned subprojects in action research, microenterprise and support of community centres). IFAD should make efforts to explore other mechanisms for supporting these bottom-up initiatives.
• The delay also meant that the evaluation workshop focused more on the training, with little feedback on the advocacy dimension.
• The training modules contained too much content for effective rollout; either the content needed to be reduced or the training needed to be longer. Participants also felt that there needed to be more attention to managing disruptions, lengthy interventions, lateness and similar issues. Finally, there was significant unmet demand for places but not enough on the training course.

Lessons learned

• Flexible implementation led to some positive results. Some activities which were not planned but were carried out were strategic and positively evaluated by participants. These included conducting the participatory organizational analysis, updating the College’s action plan and including gender equality concerns into CNCR’s strategic plan (2011-2015). Similarly, the participation in national-level sector round tables under CECI’s Uniterra programme allowed linkages to be made with complementary initiatives and provided a direct advocacy opportunity. This indicates that a flexible approach, which remains responsive to emerging opportunities, can be useful. This is especially the case when working with women and men who may not have had significant opportunity to reflect on their priorities. Projects which allow enough time for priorities to emerge should be encouraged; however, this needs to be balanced by a focus on implementation.
• The impact of advocacy is difficult to measure and attribute to RWLP. Given the low awareness levels about women’s roles and priorities in farmers’ organizations, this component can be said to have been an essential building block for the rest of the programme.

Recommendations

Recommendations arising from the 2012 evaluation workshop are set out below:
• Excellent materials (training manuals and participant workbooks) were produced and some need to be strengthened and consolidated. These materials are an important resource and should be further refined, disseminated and translated, and opportunities to practically apply them should be identified.
• Roll-out of the training should be carried out within CNCR’s member organizations to meet the demand for training in additional locations and for more people. Participants with potential to be trainers should be identified and mobilized to deliver this training.
• Core trainers should receive some additional support to improve their research and ideally to benefit from peer exchanges with other trainers.
• CNCR should recognize the newly acquired skills of the women’s wing participants and support them to apply these skills on specific occasions.
• The skills acquired by beneficiaries should be translated into action and into the governance of farmers’ organizations.
• Programme impacts should again be evaluated at a later date because many benefits can be felt only over a longer period of time. A future evaluation may also support continued momentum.
• The youth wing could learn from the experience of the women’s wings.
IFAD has already built upon the lessons learned and included these in the gender-specific components of the SFOAP, cofinanced by IFAD and the European Commission. IFAD will also do the same for other relevant upcoming programmes and projects.

“The emergence of rural women’s leadership in farmers’ organizations … arises from a process of sensitization and information from different actors, strengthening the leadership capacity of women and also, importantly, their economic power. Women who are empowered economically can then claim their rightful place in decision-making spaces.”

Khadijda Doucoure, Regional Gender Coordinator, West and Central Africa

**Nepal**

**Background and context**

In Nepal, a decade-long armed conflict through 2006 and the outmigration of men from rural areas increased the burden on women and resulted in the ‘feminization’ of agriculture. Policies, programmes and development interventions support rural women to increase their capacities to organize into groups to access opportunities more effectively. Policy initiatives include a constitutional provision (2007) to ensure that women comprise at least 33 per cent of all state structures. However, despite government support, women’s representation remains limited; for example, until recently there were no women District Agriculture Development Officers in any of the 75 districts.

Patriarchal norms typically relegate women to the home and limit their mobility, which in turn limits their economic opportunities. The Nepalese social castes create additional inequalities; Dalit (often called ‘untouchable’) women are marginalized by women from other castes, preventing them from accessing available opportunities.

**Goals and objectives**

In Nepal, the two-year RWLP pilot project, with a budget of US$150,000, covered five districts in central Nepal: Chitawan, Lalitpur, Kavre, Sindhuli and Sindhupalchowk, where most development programmes, particularly those related to climate change, were concentrated. Local adaptation plans of action (LAPAs) represented an opportunity for women to benefit equally from opportunities and to tap into available resources.

RWLP aimed to:
- Strengthen the capacities of rural women, their associations at all levels and their professional organizations.
- Enhance the quality of policy advocacy and dialogue.

**Main activities**

Programme activities focused on providing training and capacity-building for trainers and women leaders at the national and local regional levels. This included reviewing relevant policy frameworks with a gender lens and organizing advocacy activities through the media and international meetings.

RWLP was initiated with the All Nepal Peasants’ Federation (ANPFa), a key umbrella association, together with two federations of grass-roots women’s groups, HIMAWANTI and ASTHA. The women’s organizations aim to promote solidarity among rural grass-roots women to enhance their participation in decision-making processes, their access to natural resources and a more equitable distribution of the benefits deriving from these resources.

WOCAN was the implementing organization in Nepal and the Philippines. It was well placed to scale up RWLP impact

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10 Based on RWLP scoping study (2008).
through its other activities and global advocacy network of women leaders in agriculture.

A ‘training of trainers’ approach was adopted to trigger a cascade effect from trainers to leaders at the district level and then to women leaders in rural organizations. The training focused on negotiation skills, confidence-building, self-development and technical knowledge on natural resource management. The capacity development also had a very practical dimension – it was geared to enable women to access funds earmarked for gender issues at the district level. RWLP raised awareness about these funds and gave women the confidence and practical skills to access them.

Trainers were trained to roll out the capacity-development plan to lower tiers of organizations. Activities at this level targeted:

- **WOCAN** staff, with a three-day training workshop on ‘Gender Mainstreaming and Organizational Change’ for 18 ASTHA and HIMAWANTI staff and district-level women members.
- Partner organizations HIMAWANTI and ASTHA, with coaching and mentoring support from WOCAN as well as workshops to develop organizational vision and support organizational change. Organizational change encompassed gender mainstreaming and a review of organizational structure. RWLP also organized a five-day workshop to train trainers on ‘Rural Women’s Leadership Development’. This workshop focused on leadership concepts; the relationship between leadership concepts, masculinity and femininity; and reframing ‘leadership’ and building strategic skills to support it. Participants then shared their learning with other members of their organizations, with WOCAN’s support.

Leaders at the district level were trained by HIMAWANTI and ASTHA (about 300 women from six districts).

Women leaders in rural organizations benefited from the following activities:

- Women received training on ‘Women’s Leadership and Organizational Change’. The women then became the focal points for rolling out the leadership training within their groups at the local levels.
- This rollout included mentoring and coaching of rural women leaders by a lead WOCAN trainer and trained RWLP staff through workshops, field visits, individual coaching and exposure visits.

### Achievements

- Engaging men in building acceptance of women’s leadership was regarded as key in a patriarchal society and is an innovative feature of RWLP in Nepal. Women leaders identified potential male advocates and they were included in training activities. Some training sessions for farmers’ organizations even established that men should comprise a minimum of 25-30 per cent of participants. An important outcome was the establishment of an informal network of men to support women’s leadership. RWLP’s engagement of men helped to bring about a transformation of gender roles in the household:

> “I remember there was one woman whose husband beat her… for going to adult literacy classes. But today her husband is the one who reminds her to go to community meetings. I have seen plenty of examples to prove that change is possible.”

Shova Sharma from Sindhuli, Nepal
• A three-day conference on ‘Gender & Climate Change’ was the focus of RWLP’s policy advocacy in Nepal. The event brought together policymakers and practitioners to interact with women leaders at the grass-roots level from HIMAWANTI and ASTHA, who shared their concerns and experiences. A concrete focus for policy advocacy led to the inclusion of grass-roots women voices in the policy debate.

• Rural women leaders from farmers’ organizations also had the opportunity to make their voices heard in national, regional and global policy processes, such as the World Food Summit; the Civil Society Organization consultation workshop on GAFSP; the tenth, fifteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Conference of the Parties – Convention on Biological Diversity; and the IFAD-supported Farmers’ Forum in 2010, where the women leaders took part in a special session on ‘Promoting women’s leadership in farmers’ and rural producers’ organizations’.

These activities triggered profound change in the women.

• Women learned to see themselves beyond their usual roles of mother, wife and daughter-in-law. As they began to develop income-generating activities, they were able to see themselves as respected community members of society. The RLWP helped women take more interest in community-level activities, see the benefits of being more informed and demand services and resources for the benefit of the community.

• Participating in training and working together gave women the confidence to advocate for their interests. Sharing their concerns and aspirations also kick-started women’s groups. These groups made them feel less alone and helped them overcome pressure from relatives and community members who wanted to perpetuate gender stereotypes. In other words, they began to be empowered and women group leaders proved to be effective role models in supporting other women members.

• HIMAWANTI and ASTHA women leaders were able to mobilize local state and non-state resources for women’s issues. This was considered by participants to be the most important outcome of RWLP (see Box 7).

• Some women beneficiaries at the grass-roots level were also involved in the Women’s Leadership Circle (WLC) promoted by WOCAN in Nepal and other countries. WLCs are national-level platforms to develop women’s leadership and encourage regular dialogue between women policymakers and professionals and women at the grass-roots level to promote policy and implementation that is more responsive to the needs of rural women. RWLP ‘graduates’ from the Nepal WLC were able to connect with women policymakers and put into practice their newly acquired leadership skills for the benefit of their communities.

Challenges

Some of the key challenges encountered by RWLP were the following:

• There is weak institutional capacity in gender mainstreaming at the district and local levels. This has resulted in only limited efforts to close the gender gap or enable women to access funds, technologies, information and decision-making roles in farmers’ organizations. Funds earmarked for women are often underutilized and diverted.

• The initial choice of working closely with farmers’ and producers’ organizations had to be reconsidered during the pilot. ANPFA was considered to be too political, and so women’s organizations were chosen as partners.
because their members were often members of farmers’ organizations.

- Gender roles are hard to change in Nepalese rural society. Men are resistant to women’s leadership and resent having to defer to female authority.

“My father-in-law, who wanted me to become a traditional daughter-in-law, was vehemently opposed to my involvement in community work. He tried to stop me from going out and made my life miserable.”
RWLP participant, Nepal

- Gender stereotypes limit women’s potential:
  - In addition to gender inequalities, women face caste-based discrimination. Dalit women were excluded, marginalized or not informed by other women about capacity-development activities.
  - Women often have to work harder than men to prove themselves and be accepted as leaders. This is even more so for socially excluded groups such as dalits and poorer women.
  - There is a widespread misperception that women leaders do things for their own personal advantage and not for the benefit of the communities.
  - Women’s unequal access to education results in lower self-esteem and/or prevents them from being entitled to take up certain professional roles.

- Women’s mobility is often constrained by cultural norms and by their greater family responsibilities, which prevent them from attending training and realizing leadership roles. Unlike men, women do not use motorbikes, which further limits their ability to attend meetings in other districts and stay long hours; taking rides with male colleagues is culturally unacceptable.

- Women’s workloads are holding back their productive potential. Family expectations from parents, husbands and mothers-in-law result in a heavy domestic workload for women. Male outmigration and water/food scarcity deriving from climate change have further increased women’s workload and responsibilities. It is often impossible for women to balance their traditional roles with participating in training, taking up leadership positions and realizing their economic potential. For this reason, changes in household dynamics are needed to enable gender-equitable participation in farmers’ organizations and other institutions.

Lessons learned

- Social capital supports economic empowerment. The WLCs model allowed regular dialogue between women officials in government and women farmers/entrepreneurs, which created an important new space for rural women’s voices to be heard. RWLP participants in Nepal reported that it was easier for them to access funds and establish a dialogue with the authorities when they were able to talk to women in government structures. The training sessions also strengthened women’s confidence and voice, ultimately giving them greater bargaining power.

- The ‘training of trainers’ approach can only trigger a sustainable cascade process if it is supported by technical support throughout the whole training period to trainers and trainees at all levels. Without this support, there is little chance that learning will be acquired and consolidated by beneficiaries. In Nepal, district-level trainers were not able to replicate the training they received because of lack of follow-up support after the completion of the ‘training of trainers’.
BOX 7
Mobilizing women into groups to access productive resources

Between 2010 and 2011, HIMAWANTI and ASTHA were able to mobilize about Nrs. 400,000 (US$4,546) from the District Development Committees, District Agriculture and Irrigation Office, District Forest Office and community forestry user groups. Although these bodies have specific policies and mandates to invest in women and social activities, in reality these funds usually remain unallocated or are spent on infrastructure projects, such as roads and micro-hydro projects.

Not only did RWLP enable participants to access funds allocated for women in Village Development Committees and District Development Offices, but the newly strengthened and more vocal women’s groups also managed to change allocations of funds that had not been earmarked. This meant that alongside the usual investments in infrastructure, women’s literacy and the development of income-generating activities were given priority. This was because women were better able to explain the return on these investments in terms of community and family benefits – and to argue their case.

This can mean that women at the grass-roots level might receive lesser quality training, and yet that is arguably where there is the greatest need for skilled trainers. Training sessions also need to be backed up by longer-term coaching and mentoring with the farmers’ organizations and women leaders to ensure sustainability – which requires an adequate investment of resources.

- Training should cover leadership skills as well as technical knowledge.

Strengthening self-confidence, advocacy and negotiation skills are important examples of leadership skills, and these need to be backed up by technical skills, such as financial literacy, forestry, climate change, etc. Without technical knowledge and a goal of economic empowerment, leadership skills are insufficiently rooted in practical applications; yet without leadership skills, women lack the capacity to access the necessary resources to fulfil their potential. Women need to practice and consolidate their acquired leadership skills, for instance, through forums, platforms and events. Projects workplans should include this.

- Women role models inspire others. For instance, trainings delivered by women leaders were described as motivating because they presented a leadership style which was different from the more traditional masculine one.

- Women can be leaders without challenging gender norms. Women in Nepal generally preferred to develop a leadership style that was in line with their gender roles, rather than attempt to imitate male styles. For example, one training participant said that the biggest contribution of RWLP training was to
make her realize that the type of leadership she was practising (i.e. non-masculine/relational/with empathy) was a legitimate form of leadership.

- **Leadership is contextual.** RWLP activities in different locations showed that different support strategies have to be developed according to the prevailing social structures and norms.

- **Behavioural change takes time.** Trainings required more coaching than initially envisaged during the rollout stages to backstop and support the newly trained women trainers. Training methodologies had to be adapted by local trainers to meet the different training needs, capacities and communication styles of farmers’ organization members, grass-roots leaders and trainers. For example, a participating farmer leader said that self-reflection and storytelling were very powerful tools to help women open up, bond and gain confidence. As a result, WOCAN’s coaching and mentoring had to be stepped up to enable local rollout, which meant increasing the number of visits to farmers’ organizations and grass-roots organizations, which had budget implications.

- **Activities are more effective at the local levels.** In the spirit of the cascade methodology, the programme first focused on the national level, but activities proved to be more effective when targeted to the local and district levels.

- **Engaging with men helped to manage perceptions of power shifts within and outside the household.** Potential male change agents need to be identified and included – which may take time and dedicated resources.

- **Take time to target the most effective potential women leaders.** In Nepal, it was found that the most effective women leaders were those who: (i) are already practising some form of leadership in their homes, the community or other institutions; and (ii) have the motivation and resilience to lead or take on leadership positions and the potential social challenges they may face in doing so. Adequate time should be set aside for identifying participants – they may not always be the most vocal ones, or see themselves as leaders even though they are practising aspects of leadership.

### Recommendations

- **Build on the success of the RWLP model and scale up the adapted approaches in the new COSOP (at the time of writing, this is indeed the case in the draft COSOP).** This should include documenting and sharing lessons and achievements as they emerge.

- **Include the core group of people who were extensively trained during RWLP into IFAD programmes and projects, especially those concerning farmers’ organizations.**

- **Extend RWLP to the mid- and far-west regions of Nepal, targeting women at the district level.** The LAPA districts are mostly concentrated in these areas and they offer the opportunity to scale up RWLP learning.

- **Pursue the ‘gender and climate change’ agenda in Nepal, capturing experiences to make LAPAs gender-responsive.**

- **Scale up the network of men supporting women’s leadership and disseminate this experience in relevant forums.**

- **Identify potential synergies with the FAO/IFAD/UN Women/WFP joint programme in Nepal on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women.**
The Philippines

Background and context

The Philippines has a broadly gender-sensitive national legal and policy environment. The Philippine Commission on Women is an advisory body to the President, mandated to mainstream women’s concerns in policy, planning and programming of all government agencies. There is a strong tradition of women’s movements, and an active civil society pushes for change and strives to hold the Government accountable to its commitments.

Despite all this, women in the Philippines still have significantly less access to and control of the productive resources that would enable them to improve their livelihoods. Notwithstanding their contribution to the rural labour force, women’s influence in rural organizations at the national and local levels is very low and there are few women in leadership positions.

Goals and objectives

RWLP in the Philippines had the same two objectives as RWLP in Nepal:

- Strengthen the capacities of rural women, their associations at all levels and their professional organizations.
- Enhance the quality of policy advocacy and dialogue.

Main activities

WOCAN implemented the programme in partnership with the Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA) and its Philippine member PAKISAMA, a national confederation of 28 peasant organizations of small-scale farmers, fishers and indigenous peoples. PAKISAMA’s goal is to empower Filipino farmers by:

- Strengthening member organizations’ capacities to effectively participate in agrarian reform and rural development implementation, including improving their operational, financial and organizational systems.
- Promoting sustainable integrated area development, so as to build a solid framework for development with its member organizations.

PAKISAMA has sector-based rural women’s groups called LAKAMBINI, which implement its Gender and Development Programme. In the past, the LAKAMBINI had successfully launched a series of gender-awareness seminars for women and men leaders at the provincial and national levels. RWLP aimed at reviving and strengthening the Gender and Development Programme and the effective functioning of the LAKAMBINI.

RWLP also addressed issues related to women’s leadership and economic empowerment within PAKISAMA member organizations and women’s organizations, providing credit and consultancy services for income-generating initiatives.

The programme was implemented in the provinces where PAKISAMA and LAKAMBINI have members, namely: Agusan del Sur, Agusan Norte, Bukidnon, Lanao del Norte and North Cotabato in Mindanao; Albay, Aurora, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur and Sorsogon in Luzon; Iloilo and Capiz in Visayas; and Oriental Mindoro in Mindoro.

RWLP’s main activities in the Philippines are summarized below.

Training in leadership for women and men in support of gender equality.

A total of 239 women and 88 men were reached through:

- Training of trainers.
- Training sessions on leadership and gender for farmer members of PAKISAMA and LAKAMBINI. In an effort to develop a critical mass of women leaders to take up leadership positions at the national level and male leaders to support women’s leadership, 200 women and 50 men farmer-members were trained. The trainings were carried out at national and provincial levels over the two years of implementation.
Philippines
©IFAD/GMB Akash
Providing organizational development to PAKISAMA for enhanced gender mainstreaming and support to women leaders. A WOCAN consultant supported the revision of PAKISAMA’s gender policy as well as a monitoring and evaluation system. Several meetings on gender mainstreaming took place among the team of trainers and PAKISAMA’s Management Committee and National Executive Committee, resulting in a Strategic Plan for Mainstreaming Gender in PAKISAMA. The strategic plan sets out several commitments:

- PAKISAMA will conduct an organizational assessment of the gender sensitivity of all its programmes and projects.
- The plan commits to develop women’s leadership skills and conduct gender-sensitivity sessions for both women and men members.
- PAKISAMA will identify roles and responsibilities for all staff members in the implementation of the plan.
- PAKISAMA will review its code of ethics.

Strengthening PAKISAMA’s knowledge management. An audio-visual presentation ‘Women Farmers as Agents of Change’ was produced, featuring leadership moments, challenges and enabling factors of nine women. In addition, a research report entitled ‘Women and Men Farmers as Agents of Change on Gender Equality: Leadership Moments, Challenges and Enablers’ was produced, capturing the main findings and lessons learned on leadership stories collected from 45 women and 15 men. The research was complemented by lessons learned from a validation workshop on the research.

The workshop was conducted with women leaders to encourage reflection on women and leadership, as well as to document experiences of women leaders’ motivations, styles and perceived changes brought by RWLP training.

Involving AFA members at regional and international policy events. AFA members attended the following events:

- Farmers’ Forum at IFAD (2010) as well as the special session on ‘Promoting women’s leadership in farmers’ and rural producers’ organizations’.
- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Peoples’ Forum (2010).
- National and subregional steering committee meetings of the Medium-term Cooperation Programme, a regional IFAD capacity-building project for farmers’ organizations in 10 countries in Asia.\textsuperscript{11}
- The final RWLP learning workshop in Nepal.

Achievements

- PAKISAMA started to form its commodity cluster for some products (e.g. Philippine lemons), and more women members were able to take leadership in the various activities of the cluster. Some of these women members have started paralegal clinics to better understand their rights to land.
- Training has proven to be a powerful change catalyst both for participants and PAKISAMA trainers themselves, who now have a better understanding of gender issues. Additional demand for training came from PAKISAMA member organizations.
- Participants’ increased awareness about laws that exist to protect women and women’s rights has strengthened their motivation to take action, take advantage of opportunities and stand up to violence.
- Participants developed an understanding of power and leadership dynamics, as well as different types of leadership.

\textsuperscript{11} See http://asia.ifad.org/web/mtcp/mtcp-at-a-glance.
supported by concrete examples of women leaders as role models. This helped them become aware and confident that their leadership style was valid.

- RWLP stimulated concrete follow-up action; for example, participants developed action plans to use in their communities, and in Aurora, local women leaders negotiated a loan with the Department of Agrarian Reform to support a rice mill.
- PAKISAMA identified new potential women leaders at the national level.
- PAKISAMA had several trainers’ teams at the decentralized level which rolled out the training in 12 provinces under the supervision of the regional coordinators. These teams were in close contact during the implementation stage, learning and supporting each other to challenge their own ideas about roles, stereotypes and concepts of femininity and masculinity. This fostered better understanding among PAKISAMA staff and improved teamwork in the organization.
- An extensive body of information, lessons learned and leadership stories were created, many of which can be used for PAKISAMA and AFA advocacy activities on gender equality.

Challenges

- Most of the challenges related to the difficulties presented by cultural norms and stereotypes that prevent women from becoming leaders and genuinely exercising their voice. At a practical level, if women want to become leaders in organizations and their communities, they first must gain a stronger voice within the family by negotiating support from their husbands and/or brothers to attend meetings. Women also struggle to balance work and family and face mobility restrictions:

  “We were away for a one-week training on entrepreneurship. I went home at nine in the evening because it was far and was also raining. My husband did not want to open the door. He said, ‘Better stay there because you love your women’s organization more!’ I could not keep my patience anymore. I got mad and I banged on the door of our house. I said, ‘If you do not open the door, I will break it down!’ My husband was shocked that I suddenly became very brave. When I entered, I said, ‘What is the problem? We are not doing anything wrong. What is wrong with helping others? And with knowing what to do so we can help with our livelihood? We are not just wasting time loafing. We talked some more, and he just fell silent.’”

  Cheryl Oyoa, Chairperson of AGUUKAKABA (a provincial federation of women organizations in Agusan del Norte), Treasurer of AKBAYAN Division 2, Agusan del Norte

  - Self-confidence is a key barrier. Participants reported that it was difficult to overcome their own feelings of insecurity and incompetence. Women often do not see themselves as leaders:

    “At first, I was just a simple woman. I did not want to join in any community activities. But they were organizing a women’s organization and so I joined. Even if I did not want it, the women wanted me to become their President. So I accepted. When I went home, I did a self-reflection. Why did they elect me as President? What am I capable of doing? I was challenged. I said, can I do this? So I tried it.”

    Cheryl Oyoa, Chairperson of AGUUKAKABA, Treasurer of AKBAYAN Division 2, Agusan del Norte

  - RWLP-supported activities helped to kick-start PAKISAMA’s efforts to improve gender outcomes after almost eight years of inactivity; however, the training provided was not sufficient.
Lessons learned

• Training for women should include relevant skills, such as advocacy, facilitation and negotiation. An important starting point is basic gender-sensitivity training, without which women’s leadership training and behavioural and institutional change processes cannot progress. It is important to convey the concept of gender in a culturally sensitive way; some rural communities regard the concept of ‘gender’ as a western concept that disturbs the traditional harmony between women and men.

• Technical content is also important because most women have limited formal education. For example, PAKISAMA provided its members with training on financial management and accounting.

• Training delivery methods must be designed around the cultural characteristics of the audience. Storytelling proved to be particularly effective to convey how gender roles are defined by traditional beliefs. One-to-one and group mentoring and coaching have also proven to be very effective. Similarly, concrete models of women leaders were a powerful motivation for women to challenge stereotypes and build their confidence.

• Involving men in some training and awareness-raising sessions was key. When carried out effectively, this can be genuinely transformational:

   “I became aware of the issue (gender) when I became a PALAMBU officer and attended a BALAOD Mindanao training. The training raised awareness among the community because domestic violence at that time was not commonly discussed. But the training opened the eyes of parents and teachers. After the training, incidences of violence against abused children and wives lessened. I myself realized this (what gender is all about). In my family, I presumed that it was normal not to consult your wife on decisions at home as the head of the family. But I realized that we need to consult our wives. So now, I call even my kids to a meeting and ask, “I have money, what do I buy: a motorcycle or land?”

   Rogelio Sarilla, 43 years old, President of PALAMBU, Chair of PAKISAMA Mindanao Regional Council, Bukidnon

Seminars enhanced men’s awareness about gender differences as issues affecting both women and men. They helped tackle preconceptions that it was “all about women becoming stronger and more aggressive.” In several cases, both the husband and wife took the same training together, resulting in reduced domestic violence, more equitable ways of taking decisions and allocating resources within the household. This even translated to the public sphere and increased women’s voice in local government and farmers’ organizations. However, there was also a need for some separate training, as men tended to dominate discussions.

• Concepts and skills learned during the training need reinforcement through practice, and opportunities for putting newly acquired skills to use should be actively sought as part of any support.

• Documentation is very important for organizational and personal learning. Trainees could keep a diary and a process narrative should be drafted as one of the outputs of the training.

• Developing women’s capacities to access funding and mobilize resources is important in order for them to become autonomous and pursue their plans.

RWLP participants identified strategies other than capacity development to support women’s access to decision-making positions and effectively exert leadership in farmers’ organizations. These strategies included:
Supportive policies within farmers’ organizations, which are supported by gender-sensitive leaders (see Box 9)

Affirmative action/quotas for leadership positions (e.g. the President of PAKISAMA’s women’s wing is automatically a member of its national executive and legislative committee)

Stipulating that at least 40 per cent of training participants should be women

Providing support for women to attend activities outside the home by, for example, providing day-care centres, technologies that reduce housework and funds to pay for transportation to meetings;

Providing support to develop income-generating activities for women. Women’s economic empowerment is key for them to gain confidence, self-esteem and skills, which increases their chances of accessing leadership positions

Supporting women’s continuous learning in their communities through, for example, community radio and visits from agricultural extension workers to their farms/village

Creating networks to sustain achievements and enable women to support each other. In the Philippines, women’s networks at the village level have collaborated to formulate gender action plans and develop project proposals for donors.

BOX 8
The training of my dreams

RWLP participants in the Philippines articulated key elements for effective training and provided recommendations for future training programmes:

- Adapt design to the local context, needs and capacities of the group.
- Encourage relevant and creative methodologies using audio-visual materials that appeal to reason, emotions and values, such as active sharing of experiences, storytelling and reflection.
- Resource persons/trainers should have adequate knowledge of gender equality; they should be able to share their own stories, ready to change approaches according to the context, able to handle sensitive topics and able to make jokes that are not sexist and are culturally appropriate.
- The training should result in increased knowledge and a concrete action plan and there should be opportunities for participants to demonstrate what they have learned.

Recommendations

- Move from training individuals to institutional change. Trainings should be seen in the wider context of institutional change, where improved gender equality is a goal in itself and a mechanism to make farmers’ organizations more effective. The wider enabling framework in the Philippines is a good foundation for consolidating gains achieved so far in women’s leadership.
- Follow up on PAKISAMA’s Strategic Plan for Mainstreaming Gender to ensure its implementation. This requires that action plans for gender mainstreaming in organizations be developed and implemented, with financial support,
technical backstopping and monitoring. The experience should also be documented, as it may be of interest to other countries. In addition, mainstream gender into other PAKISAMA policies (e.g. its code of ethics).

- Integrate the LAKAMBINI within PAKISAMA to support the inclusion of gender activities and women’s support within the main structure. The separation of the two structures hinders gender mainstreaming because women’s issues are always automatically assigned to the LAKAMBINI and PAKISAMA leaders feel no obligation to address them as part of their overall agenda.

- Reach out to RWLP’s network of women’s organizations which are not yet members of PAKISAMA to create a wider membership base of women. RWLP reached women’s organizations and women leaders at the local levels, and they could be supported further to be more active at the national level.
References and resources


IFAD. 2010. *Promoting women’s leadership in farmers’ and rural producers’ organizations*. Special Session of the third global meeting of the Farmers’ Forum in conjunction with the Thirty-third Session of IFAD’s Governing Council.


WOCAN. Resources on women’s leadership, at: http://www.wocan.org/resource-keywords/womens-leadership-0.

**Country-specific resources**

**Madagascar**

IFAD’s projects in Madagascar give women more opportunities, but the struggle continues. http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/country/voice/tags/madagascar/women_mdg.


**Senegal**


**Nepal and the Philippines**

