



# IFAD's Gender Strengthening Programme

in Eastern and Southern Africa

## Africa II: Eastern and Southern Africa

Number of Ongoing Projects by Country as of September 2000

*This publication is intended to inform IFAD-supported project management units (PMUs), other donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Eastern and Southern Africa about IFAD's Gender Strengthening Programme in the region. The programme is currently in the process of identifying challenges faced by projects, emphasizing empirical findings from field diagnostic studies. These findings, coupled with local knowledge and the experience of PMUs, will be fed back into subregional workshops, during which recommendations for improvement and suitable strategies will be identified and discussed by project staff. The programme will lead to the implementation of pilot activities that will test new approaches for gender mainstreaming in IFAD-supported projects. The pilot activities will be monitored closely in order that both IFAD staff and PMUs can draw lessons of experience that will enable them to contribute to improving the design of future IFAD-supported projects.*



IFAD's Gender Strengthening Programme in Eastern and Southern Africa is generously financed by the Government of Norway

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# Background

Over the last 20 years, IFAD's efforts to increase opportunities for poor rural women and men have broadened and deepened. One of the pivotal elements of IFAD's strategy for alleviating poverty, its overall mandate, is to address gender issues and mainstream gender at each stage of the project cycle. The Fund has learned through experience that gender mainstreaming contributes to making IFAD-supported projects more effective on the ground.

IFAD shifted its focus from 'women' to 'gender' in 1990. This was not merely a semantic shift: it meant placing emphasis on the social context of women's and men's roles and on the relationship between the sexes. Thus addressing the gender issue means identifying the roles, responsibilities, constraints and opportunities of women and men from both a socio-economic and socio-cultural perspective. It also means that women's and men's concerns and experiences play an integral part in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all projects.

IFAD's Eastern and Southern Africa Division (Angola, Botswana, Burundi, The Comoros, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius,

Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) strongly believes that gender analysis and gender mainstreaming contribute to making projects more effective. In order to direct its support appropriately, it is important to know who undertakes what tasks in agriculture, in income-generating activities and in the household. It is also important to know who has access to and control of the various resources that are critical to the effective pursuit of livelihood strategies that promote reduced vulnerability and higher economic and social well-being. Central to the Eastern and Southern Africa Division's approach is the recognition of the different, complementary roles played by women and men within the household and the community.

Under the projects financed by IFAD, equality between women and men is not an end in itself but rather one of the tools that contribute to efficiently reducing rural poverty. The proportion of women and men who participate in determinate project activities should be based on what women and men would like to do themselves and *how efficient their participation has proved relative to the results achieved*. Support for participation must focus on areas that are perceived as critical by women and men themselves and on those that are critical to poverty reduction. There is a need to understand and address the underlying socio-economic mechanisms that cause destructive disparities between rural and urban areas, between wealthy and poor households, and between women and men, including their own definition of objectives and interests. In very few cases are gender relations the prime determinants of poverty in rural areas. But it is essential to identify the influence they do exert, particularly with regard

## *Perspectives on Gender*



Kenya

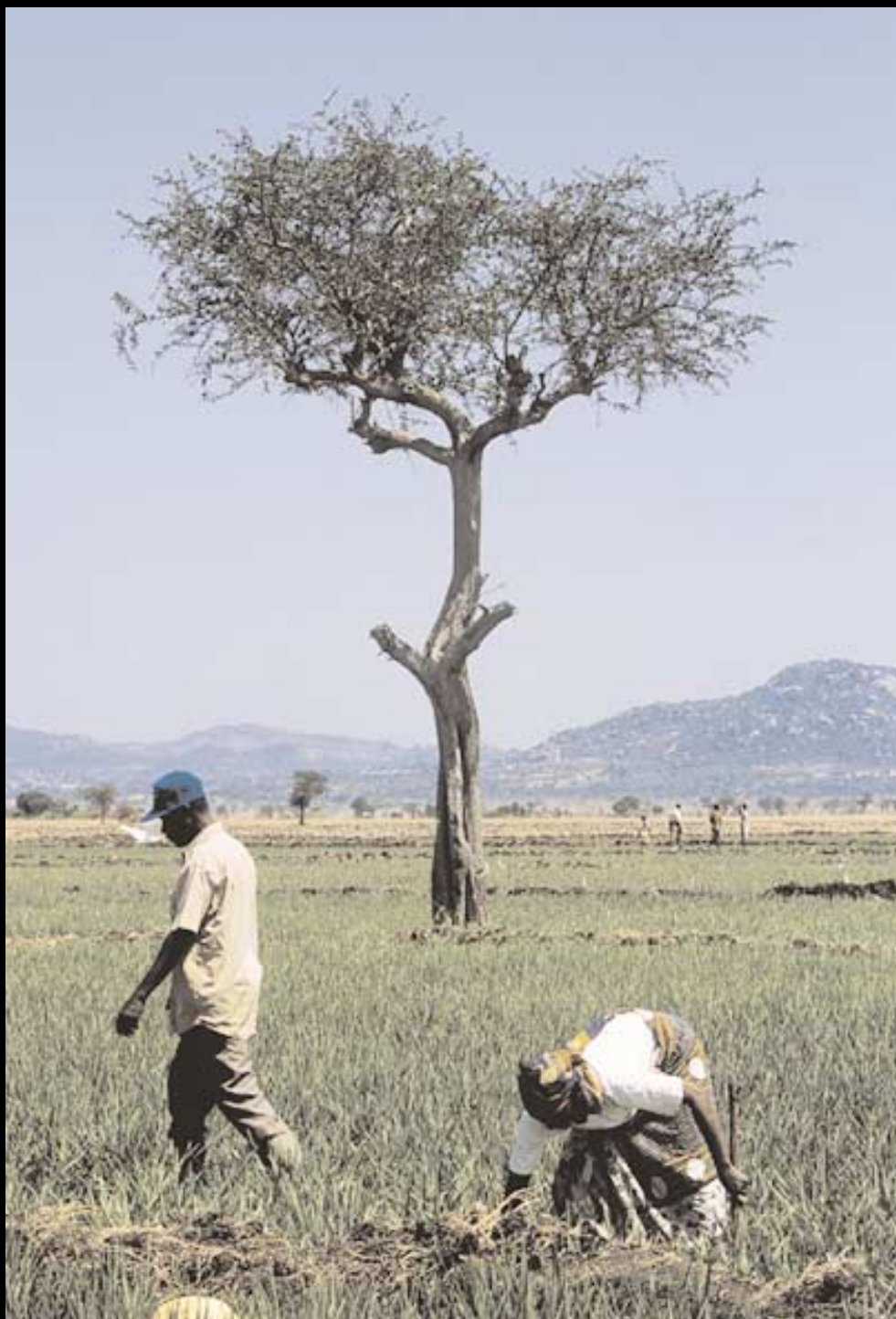
**Gender:** the term gender refers to the social, economic and cultural roles and relations between women and men. This includes their different responsibilities in a given culture or location. Unlike the sex of women or men, which is biologically determined, the gender roles of women and men are socially constructed, and such roles can change over time and vary according to geographic location.

**Gender analysis** refers to the analysis of the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men, the pattern of their access to and control over resources and benefits, their perceived problems and priorities, and how information about these is used in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It takes into account the local division of labour in various farming systems, as well as variations in peak and slack seasons, socio-economic strata, ethnic groups and household types. Gender analysis helps frame questions about women's and men's roles and relations in order to avoid making stereotyped assumptions about who does what, when and why. The aim of such analysis is to formulate development interventions that are better targeted to meet both women's and men's needs and to address their constraints.

**Gender mainstreaming** within the United Nations system has been defined by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as *"the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences integral*

*dimensions in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality." Mainstreaming is often misinterpreted to mean the equal participation of women and men in all project activities. Within IFAD's Eastern and Southern Africa Division, the term mainstreaming is used in line with the ECOSOC definition, in which gender aspects are taken into account at all stages of the project cycle.*

**Gender equality** is broadly defined as *"...equal enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Gender equality does not mean that men and women become the same, but that their opportunities and life chances are equal. The emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment does not presume a particular model of gender equality for all societies and cultures, but reflects a concern that women and men have equal opportunities to make choices about what gender equality means and work in partnership to achieve it"* (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, (OECD)). For IFAD's Eastern and Southern Africa Division, this does not imply that women and men should necessarily undertake the same tasks, but rather that both should be given relevant and adequate support through IFAD-financed project activities to respond to their specific needs and aspirations.



to their impact on the livelihood strategies of poor rural people, and to work with both women and men to overcome them.

In 1998, a Supplementary Fund Agreement was signed between the Kingdom of Norway and IFAD to finance activities with “a clear and adequate gender focus” in sub-Saharan African countries eligible for highly concessional lending terms. The objective of the agreement was to improve the impact of IFAD projects while demonstrating added value. The availability of grant funding from Norway prompted the Eastern and Southern Africa Division to undertake a rapid assessment of the gender aspects of its ongoing projects. At that time, there were approximately 50 projects in the region, representing almost half a billion United States dollars in IFAD financing.

The Division’s assessment, conducted in April 1999, reviewed the importance that had been accorded to gender at project design. A picture was obtained of the measures introduced by projects to reach women and men and to support their economic activities. The assessment showed that some projects have been rather successful in mainstreaming gender; others have accorded less importance to the issue; and still others needed to develop a basic approach to appreciating the significance of gender relations in the pursuit of their objectives.

IFAD-financed projects and programmes influence government and donor expenditures and are important elements of the rural development scene, particularly for the poor. While the findings of the assessment showed many successes, there is clearly potential for greater impact and the need for a programme to strengthen gender focus.

With USD 1.8 million from the supplementary grant funds provided by Norway, IFAD’s Eastern and Southern Africa Division has developed such a programme, which was initiated in October 1999 and will run for three years. This brochure describes the components of the programme, progress made to date, and the challenges that remain to be addressed if women and men are to derive substantive benefits from IFAD-supported projects.

### ***Rapid Assessment Gender Checklist - Samples***

- ***Does the project aim at gender mainstreaming or at targeting specific activities to women; does it use a combination of the two, or neither?***
- ***Have gender-specific labour constraints been considered in the design of activities?***
- ***Has provision been made for gender sensitization training of project staff during start-up or implementation?***
- ***Has literacy training been included in project activities?***