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What works for gender equality and women's empowerment - a review of practices and results

EVALUATION SYNTHESIS



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Evaluation synthesis

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Front cover photo by Luigi Cuna

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Abbreviations and acronyms

GEWE	gender equality and women's empowerment
CDC	community development committee
CONDEPE	Nations and Peoples of Ecuador Development Council
CPE	country programme evaluation
FLUCs	forest land use certificates
MSE	micro and small enterprises
PCRv	project completion report validation
PPA	project performance assessment
SACCO	savings and credit cooperatives
ToC	theory of change

Background

IFAD has committed to improve its performance on gender practices during the period of the Tenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD10), in particular the share of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) interventions aiming at transformative change. There is no agreed definition of 'transformative' within IFAD yet. For the purpose of this evaluation synthesis, we define transformative approaches as those that aim to overcome the root causes of inequality and discrimination through promoting sustainable, inclusive and far-reaching social change. Transformative approaches challenge existing social norms and the distribution of power and resources.

Conceptual framework

The evaluation synthesis provides a conceptual framework for identifying practices that have delivered GEWE results, in particular those that are transformative and thus relevant in the context of the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable

Development Goals. The conceptual framework for this synthesis is captured in a theory of change (ToC), presenting pathways towards GEWE.

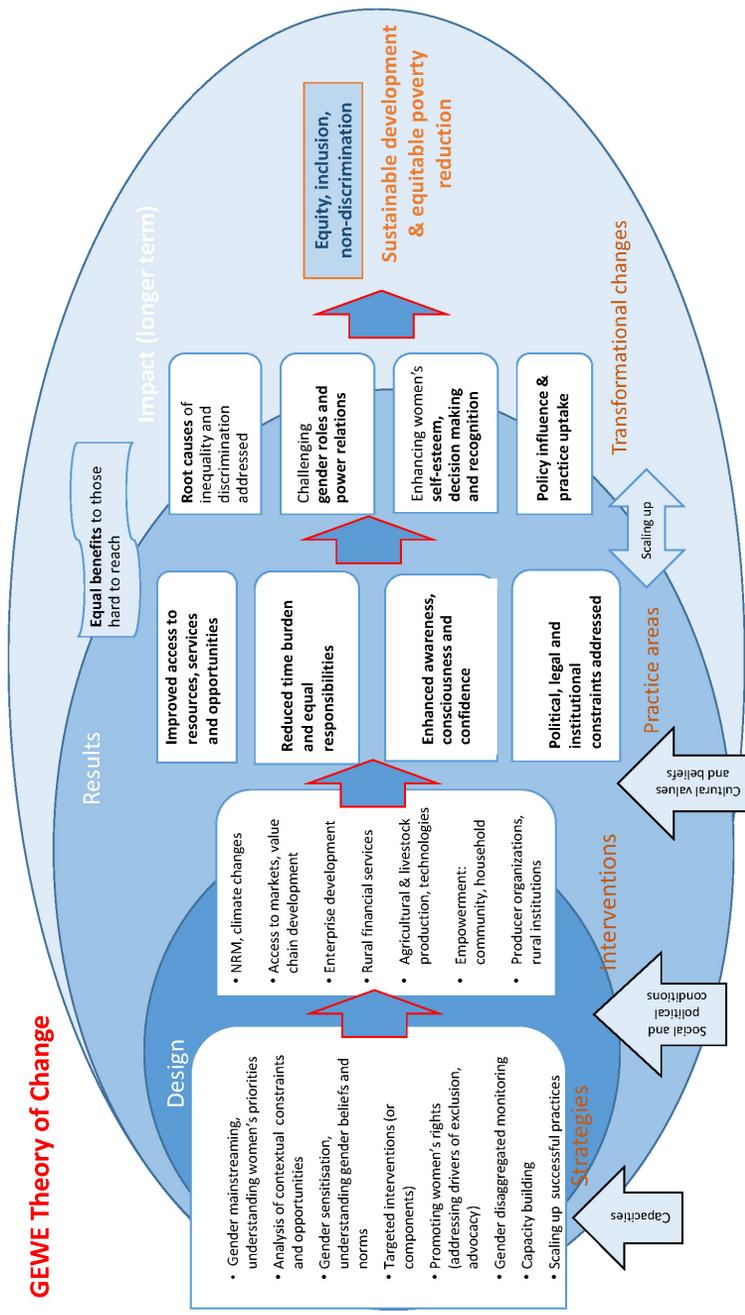
On the right side, the ToC highlights the ultimate GEWE impact. This is an integral part of sustainable development and equitable poverty reduction, and is IFAD's Strategic Framework Goal.¹ It expands the description, to highlight the more ambitious and transformative nature of the Agenda 2030 goals:

- equity, which focuses on the conditions of access to assets and opportunities;
- inclusion, highlighting the multidimensional and 'deeper' nature of constraints women face; and
- non-discrimination, which describes individuals or (usually) groups being denied opportunities and access.

GEWE contributes to the ultimate impact in two ways, each considered transformational in the sense of Agenda 2030. First, the 'no one left behind' agenda is articulated as providing equal benefits to those hardest to reach: this means

¹ IFAD's Strategic Framework Goal is to enable "poor rural women and men to improve their food security and nutrition, raise their incomes and strengthen their resilience" (from: IFAD Gender Policy).

GEWE Theory of Change



reaching women, but also the most marginalized of women, as women do not form a homogenous group, and gender needs to be specific to context, location, ethnicity, etc. This can be through women-specific interventions or components and/or gender mainstreaming, making the reduction of gender inequalities “an integral part of the organization’s strategy, policies and operations”.²

Second, a transformational agenda is not just about benefits to poor women, but is also about addressing the economic, political and cultural barriers of gender inequality. The latter is harder to measure and monitor, and typically requires a deeper analysis of underlying structures and norms of exclusion and discrimination, and often more in-depth gender training of programme and monitoring staff.

These changes are expected to be achieved through measurable changes (stated GEWE results) in four areas: improved access to resources and opportunities; more equal work burden and reduced time poverty of women; increased

decision-making power at various levels; and changes in norms and values around gender equality.³ It is expected that these dimensions (of empowerment) are likely to interact and be inter-dependent.

Practices

To enable generalization of findings and lesson learning, we classify GEWE practices with evidence in the 57 evaluation reports in four main areas. These are not exhaustive in terms of women’s empowerment or gender equality, but focus on the key areas of IFAD’s operations. Importantly, as gender equality and women’s empowerment are multifaceted, interventions typically need to be multisectoral, and sometimes include components or activities affecting more than one of these areas.⁴

First, and the focus of much of IFAD’s investment, is **access to resources, services and opportunities**. The most common interventions in the IFAD portfolio relate to providing rural financial services

² IFAD Gender Policy.

³ Three of these are direct reflections of the Strategic Objectives in the IFAD Gender Policy; social change (norms, status, confidence) is added here, as a key ingredient of transformative change.

⁴ For the detail, see annex IV with the classification of the 57 evaluation reports in these four areas.

and enhancing income-generating activities, including through technological improvements and access to productive assets. In many cases, the provision of financial and other services is combined with training for livelihood (and other) activities. Other interventions are focused on backyards to enhance food-security, and access to markets and integration in value chains. Most of these interventions can be provided to households or communities in general, or targeted to women, and effects are likely to differ.

Reducing **time poverty** and more equal sharing of productive and reproductive responsibilities can be classified as a second area. The gender division of labour defines women's and men's gender-differentiated time-use patterns. These are affected by many factors, including practical issues, such as household composition, access to water and fuel, availability of infrastructure, and distance to key economic and social services such as schools, health centres, financial institutions, and markets, but also social and cultural norms.⁵ In general, women's time investment in household responsibilities tends to be much greater than

men's, and reducing this time burden can be a pre-condition to enhancing well-being and productivity.⁶ We therefore identified this as a separate area, even though there is some overlap with the first area.

Third, in many cases, women's empowerment is hindered by political, legal, and institutional constraints, including, for example, those that safeguard women's safety. It is important that interventions are cognizant of these constraints and the opportunities provided by reforms. Engagement with national institutions, from local levels upwards, is also important to enhance project sustainability and the possibilities for replication and lesson learning, and may ultimately contribute to **creating an enabling environment** for GEWE. Promoting women's participation in local institutions is a particularly important aspect of empowerment, and may lead to wider social change.

Fourth, there are close links between the economic and the cultural aspects of empowerment, particularly if viewed from a transformative

⁵ See CM Blackden and Q. Wodon. 2006. Gender, Time Use, and Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. World Bank Working Paper No 73.

⁶ IFAD (2016) Reducing women's domestic workload through labour saving technologies and practices <https://www.ifad.org/topic/gender/overview>.

perspective. These links go both ways: **enhancing women’s and men’s awareness, consciousness and confidence** – through community groups, trainings – can be important pre-conditions for project uptake (or indeed articulating priorities); and enhanced access to resources can, and should, enhance women’s confidence and voice within households and communities to influence community development and take-on traditionally male roles, therefore, advancing towards changing societal patterns.

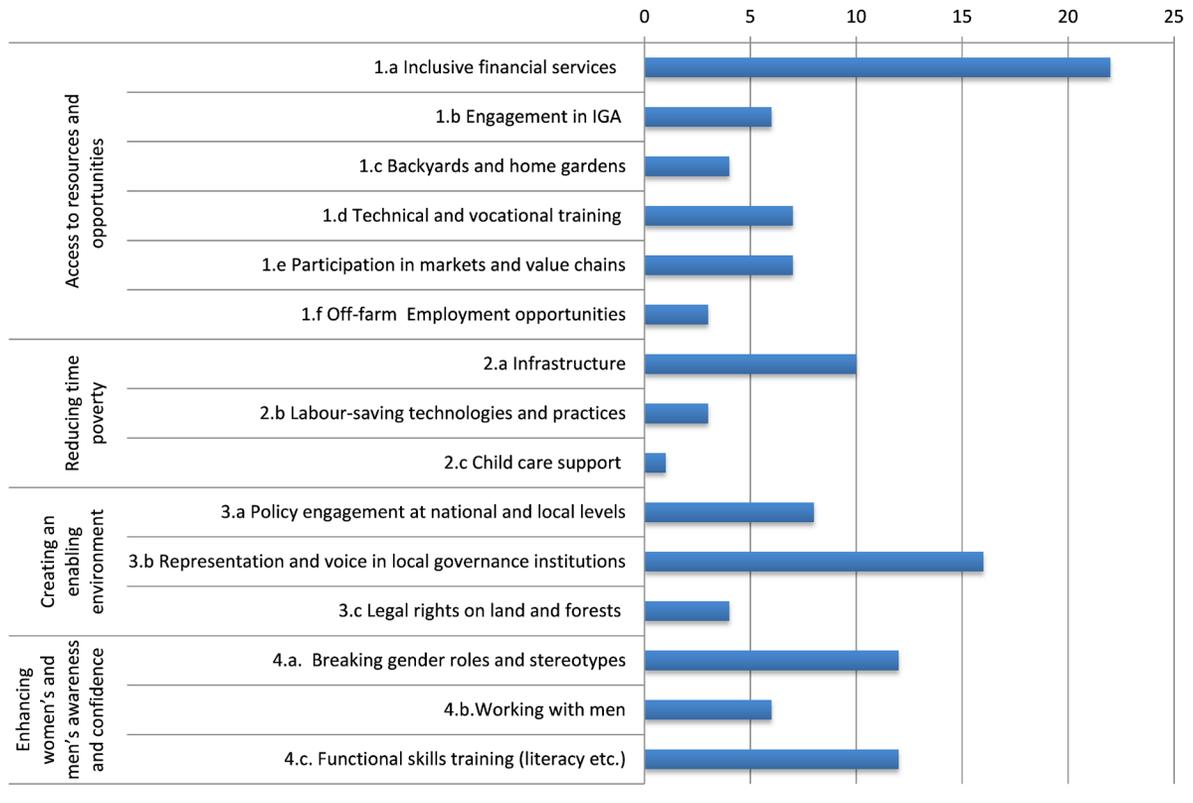
Within the sample of 57 evaluations, the synthesis identified 121 GEWE practices. Based on the four main practice areas of the ToC, we classified them into the four main types. The largest practice area is around women’s economic resources and opportunities. Other types of interventions are, although fewer in number, still critical for achieving GEWE results.

- Improving women’s access to resources and opportunities (47 practices or 39 per cent)
- Reducing women’s time poverty (14 practices or 12 per cent)

- Addressing political, legal and institutional constraints (29 practices or 24 per cent)
- Strengthening women’s and men’s awareness, consciousness and confidence (30 practices or 25 per cent)

The following chart provides an overview of the practice areas and the specific types of GEWE practices.

Number of GEWE practices in the sample classed by categories and areas



Insights

Overall, our review found that guidance by IFAD's corporate GEWE Plan of Action and policy was important in ensuring that interventions were relevant and address key GEWE issues. IFAD's attention to key constraints highlighted by global gender indices such as lack of access to rural financial services, time poverty and exclusion from group participation is highly relevant, also in the context of the Agenda 2030.

The review found that in many cases IFAD has addressed the root causes of gender inequality and women's powerlessness, in particular illiteracy, exclusion from access to resources and limited social capital. Participatory approaches and capacity-building, including group formation and functional skills training, had a clear impact on women's self-esteem, status and recognition, and in a number of cases challenged gender roles and power relations.

Most of the changes supported by IFAD interventions were at individual level. They have successfully empowered women by providing access to resources or acquiring new skills, for example. Yet transformation requires change beyond individual capabilities. The review

identified some interventions that successfully contributed to changing cultural norms and practices, but those changes are less tangible and often not well documented and monitored. There were only very few examples where IFAD interventions enabled formal systemic change, for example on laws, policies and government capacities, and this is where a major gap exists.

Targeting women. The assumption underlying most targeting strategies is that women will be able to benefit, and that their priorities will be addressed through participatory planning and implementation. To some extent, participatory processes are instrumental in addressing women's needs, and there are many positive examples of where highly participatory approaches have led to social change. Nevertheless, explicit consideration of specific women's needs and specific strategies to target women are critical to ensuring that women benefit equally and that their strategic needs are addressed. There is scope to better target the diversity of women along lines of ethnicity, religion, and life cycle through specific targeting strategies. Participatory approaches are often not effective in overcoming generally-held beliefs about particular groups, in particular minority groups, which must be addressed through specific and targeted interventions.

The synthesis concludes that in project design there are opportunities to be more explicit and intentional about the choices to approach GEWE. There is no doubt that IFAD interventions have created significant benefits for women. The provision of general infrastructure and in particular water is not necessarily a gender intervention, but has important gendered aspects, and can be enhanced to ensure broader benefits for women. The review showed that provision of infrastructure can address some root causes of gender inequality, such as time poverty, and that it can galvanize group action to also empower women. But these benefits must be intentionally built into the design and they must be consistently followed up and monitored. Furthermore, sustainable access to resources, in particular land, often also requires changes in laws and administrative practices that need to be considered at design.

Evidence of benefits and GEWE outcomes. While gender is a significant focus in many of IFAD projects, the documentation on the analysis of gender inequalities, and impacts on these as a result of projects, tends to be limited. Identifying

good practices from the existing evaluations is often further complicated by the fact that most interventions work with a combination of practices.

This review found that there is an opportunity to document these better, to enable lesson learning. For example, project documentation could be more explicit about definitions and meanings of empowerment, how this is assessed, and what results the project achieves – both in terms of empowering women and the broader positive impact this has.

Measuring transformative change is an inherently complex and holistic endeavour and gender-transformative measurement systems must be equipped to embrace complexity and context-specificity, as well as the halting and often unpredictable nature of social change. There is a wealth of promising processes and practices for measuring meaningful relational change, social norm change or change in the less tangible aspects of recognition.⁷

Good practices. The systematic review helped identify some general patterns that characterize

⁷ See: Emily Hillenbrand, Nidal Karim, Pranati Mohanraj and Diana Wu. 2015. Measuring gender-transformative change. A review of literature and promising practices. CARE USA for WorldFish and the CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems.

effective and transformative gender practices. The synthesis found a number of practices that, in combination with other more conventional interventions, led to transformative changes. Reducing drudgery and challenging gender norms have led to transformational changes in secluded and marginalized communities, where in particular the provision of water as common good had a catalytic effect.

Interventions that have a clear transformative purpose were found to be more effective for GEWE. An important transformative purpose is to break traditional gender roles and stereotypes through activities that can range from training, income-generation or marketing to participation in decision-making. This can also be part of social mobilization and leadership strategies, which in some cases have helped women to claim political spaces.

Although some practices may be more transformative than others, it is ultimately the combination of practices that brings about change. Thus the synthesis concludes that it is the use of multiple and complementary gender practices that can facilitate changes in gender roles and relations. For example, practices to improve women's access to resources and opportunities in combination with practices to enhance women's and men's

awareness and consciousness were found very effective.

Policy engagement on GEWE has not yet received sufficient attention and support, but it is an important element of a transformative approach. Important legal and policy constraints can be effectively addressed through engagement with government and women's organizations or networks at local and national level, building on good GEWE practices on the ground.

Building strategic networks and alliances on GEWE has proved successful in some cases, but was not systematically pursued. Powerful change agents for transformative approaches can be government partners or national agencies, if they are sufficiently sensitized. In many cases, microfinance institutions, cooperatives, non-governmental organizations, economic interest groups, indigenous organizations or district assemblies have been change agents. Also the sensitization of men and traditional leaders and making them change agents themselves has proved successful in shifting gender roles. Gender focal points are often seen as important change agents, although the evidence from evaluations is not conclusive in this respect. Gender focal points may often not have been sufficiently empowered themselves to facilitate broader changes.



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Lessons

- 1) **Empowering and gender transformative approaches** need to be integrated into project design. Evidence shows that interventions directly aiming at transformative changes are more effective for GEWE than general and inclusive approaches to rural poverty reduction.
- 2) **Multiple and complementary activities** promoting gender equality and women's empowerment are more likely to facilitate changes in gender roles and relations.
- 3) Concrete measures to reduce **women's workloads** must be part of project design, as high workloads may prevent women from participating. Provision of firewood and water can reduce workloads, whereas new income-generating activities may add to women's workloads. Providing childcare can enable women to participate in new activities.
- 4) Support to **women's organizations**, e.g. for credit, marketing and community planning, is conducive to GEWE because it can provide platforms for mutual support and interest, in particular in conservative contexts. Social mobilization and enhanced leadership may also help women to claim political spaces.
- 5) **Working with men** is critical as they are often the gatekeepers of customary practices that limit women's access to resources or public spaces.
- 6) A rigorous analysis of the socio-economic **context** is needed for effective strategies to address the root causes of gender inequality and women's powerlessness and to be able to challenge gender roles and power relations.
- 7) **Cultural sensitivity** is required for discussing and promoting gender equality and women's empowerment with local men and traditional leaders, in particular in challenging contexts.
- 8) **Effective project implementation** is a necessary condition for having successful gender interventions. Resources for gender-related activities need to be adequately budgeted and used.
- 9) **Highly participatory approaches** are important for gender-inclusive outcomes, if combined with specific strategies to target women.

- 10) Measures to protect women from **violence** may enable them to claim public spaces, such as markets. In some cases such interventions were among the enabling factors transforming women's lives.
- 11) Promoting **unconventional and new roles for women** helps shifting mindsets and commonly held beliefs. For example, supporting income-generating activities outside the traditional division of labour or training women as extensionists, community or trainers helps create new role models and challenges stereotypes.
- 12) Women's constraints exist at broader policy and macro-economic levels as well as at the project level; while this limits transformative potential at project level, there are opportunities to work alongside policy changes and with organizations at national level to leverage the intended change at project level.
- 13) **Policy engagement** must be part of a transformative approach, to ensure that positive changes on the ground are sustainable and are brought to the attention of decision makers for scaling up.
- 14) What "**gender transformative change**" means depends on the context. Different benchmarks are needed for different contexts, but good contextual analysis is a general prerequisite.

Case studies

Country	Project name
Bangladesh	Market Infrastructure Development Project in Charland Regions (MIDPCR)
Brazil	Rural Communities Development Project in the Poorest Areas of the State of Bahia
Burkina Faso	Sustainable Rural Development Programme (PDRD)
Burundi	Rural Recovery and Development Programme (PRDMR)
Chad	Kanem Rural Development Project
Ecuador	Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian Development Project (PRODEPINE)
Ghana	Rural Enterprises Project, phase II (REP II)
India	Livelihoods Improvement Project in the Himalayas
Mongolia	Rural Poverty Reduction Programme
Rwanda	Rural Small and Microenterprise Promotion Project Phase II (PPMER II)
Senegal	Agricultural Development Project in Matam – Phase II (PRODAM II)
Sri Lanka	Dry Zone Livelihood Support and Partnerships Programme
Sudan	Gash Sustainable Livelihoods Regeneration Project (GSLRP)
Syrian Arab Republic	Badia Rangelands Development Project (BRDP)
Uganda	Area-based Agricultural Modernization Programme (AAMP)
Uganda	Vegetable Oil Development Project (VODP)
Viet Nam	Rural Income Diversification Project in Tuyen Quang Province (RIDP)
Yemen	Al Mahara Rural Development Project (AMRDP) and Dhamar Participatory Rural Development Project (DPRDP)*
Yemen	Dhamar Participatory Rural Development Project (DPRDP)
Zambia	Smallholder Enterprise and Marketing Programme

* The case study focuses on an activity (community development associations) that was initiated under AMRDP and developed further under DPRDP. It is for this reason that both projects are discussed within a single case study.

Country	Bangladesh	CASE STUDY
Project name	Market Infrastructure Development Project in Charland Regions (MIDPCR)	
Implementation period	2005-2014	
Project type	Rural development	
Main documents	Project completion report validation (PCRv)	

Context: In 2011, Bangladesh ranked 69 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.6812 (ranking 118 in economic participation, 11 in political empowerment, 123 in health and survival and 108 in educational attainment). The project area comprises the very poor and inequalities in this area are higher than in most parts of Bangladesh. Literacy levels are low (in particular those of women), family size is large and male migration is high - leaving women to manage farms. Women-headed-households and women labourers are among the poorest and most vulnerable in the Char lands with low participation in construction, off-farm employment, market trading and market committees. Gender-based violence and women's heavy workloads are also causes of gender inequality and poverty. Markets were generally considered places "frequented by men" making women feel uncomfortable to go there to buy and sell produce. No or limited water and sanitation facilities for women in the market represented another deterrent.

Gender strategy: The National Women's Development Policy (2011) of the Government of Bangladesh emphasizes the importance of women's access to markets and employment. The project design mainstreamed gender considerations into the two principle components of infrastructure development and production and market group development. The gender strategy aimed to increase women's participation in construction and labour contracting societies, create specific facilities in markets for women, enhance the incomes of women through employment/income generation, enhance livestock based assets of women and improve the mobility of women with better roads.

Activity/ies: Improve women's access to and participation in markets by ensuring 25 per cent of the market is reserved for women traders and this area includes newly constructed shops for women (where the lease does not have to be paid for three years). In addition and in line with new government rules, the project aimed to create dedicated women's market sections

and enforce women participation quotas in the Market Management Committees. Clean water and sanitation facilities were also provided for women in the markets.

Outputs: Spaces were reserved in every market for women traders and 14 women's market sections were built, increasing the number of women trading in the 66 markets from 48 to 197.

Impact: Safe spaces in the markets for women and their representation in Market Management Committees enabled more women to trade in market areas and encouraged more women buyers to visit these markets. Women report feeling safe to go to the market because they are cleaner, better organized and better connected to surrounding villages (after road construction). The volume of trade in markets and trader income are reported to have increased (although data are not disaggregated between men and women). The increased income has been used to improve housing, purchase assets and improve food security.

Overall, the increased income and improved job opportunities from all project market development interventions have changed women's status. Decisions in the households, for instance on purchasing food or cleaning products, are now

made jointly. In some communities, women participate more than before in community meetings and decision-making.

Sustainability: Prospects for sustainability are good based on how well the activities have been received and the positive impacts achieved. Project activities and approaches also enforce new government rules. There is limited information to analyse the cultural, physical and operational sustainability of the market developments.

Success factors: A good situational analysis and effective targeting of women headed households and women labourers have meant that this poor social group have benefited from the project

Agents of change: The women themselves. The Local Government Engineering Department had a strong gender action plan that contributed to the GEWE process.

Limitations: The number of women's market sections in the markets was limited to 14. Owing to their success, women would like many more to be built. With improved mobility and economic opportunities women have reported an increase in their workload. The women would benefit from reduced time burdens from performing unproductive tasks and more equitable workloads between men and women.

Country	Brazil	CASE STUDY
Project name	Rural Communities Development Project in the Poorest Areas of the State of Bahia	
Implementation period	2006-2014	
Project type	Rural development	
Main documents	Project performance assessment (PPA)	

Context: In 2011, Brazil ranked 82 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.6679 (ranking 68 in economic participation, 114 in political empowerment, 1 in health and survival and 66 in educational attainment). In the programme area women suffered from a heavy workload which limited their productive and income-generating activities and subsequently limited household food and nutrition security.

Strategy: The project gender strategy aimed to improve household food security, reduce poverty and improve gender equality through the active participation of women in economic organizations and reducing gender inequalities in rural communities. Gender was mainstreamed throughout all project components to ensure equal participation of men and women in all project activities. The gender strategy addressed the issues of exclusion (equitable access), discrimination (supporting full participation of rural women

in economic organizations) and unequal power relations (reducing the training gap between rural men and women; full participation of rural women in economic organizations). The project initially planned that women would be 30 per cent of the beneficiaries and this was later raised to 50 per cent.

Activity/ies: Backyards gardens for women to manage and produce vegetables, fruit and herbs for consumption and sale at the market. IFAD provided support through material support and technical assistance. Water tanks were also provided alongside the backyard gardens to irrigate the land in the semi-arid region throughout the year. In addition to the backyard gardens and water tanks, labour-saving technologies such as fuel-efficient stoves and processing machines were important elements of the gender strategy to free up women's time.

Outputs: A total of 4893 backyard gardens were built and 6245 water tanks of 5m³ were constructed.

Impact: The backyard gardens had multiple positive impacts at the household level – increased income, improved food and nutrition security and the economic empowerment of women. Beneficiaries highly valued the backyard garden activities and reported them as one of the main reasons for improved productive activities in the community.

The food produced in the backyard gardens was consumed by the household and sold at the market. This both increased and diversified household income and enabled women to buy essential household items and protein-rich food, such as meat, chicken and eggs. The additional net annual income generated from backyard gardens ranged from approximately US\$490 to US\$981. Although this is not high in absolute terms, it eased household budget constraints to make essential purchases. Household nutrition improved through eating more protein-rich food as well as more diverse fruit and vegetables (lettuce, beetroot, cabbage, onion, oranges, lemons and mangoes) grown in the backyard gardens and tree nurseries. Food security improved

thanks to the increased availability of food from the backyard gardens and the additional food purchased. Irrigation water from the water tanks also supported the year-round production of vegetables to improve the stability of the improved food and nutrition security.

The backyard gardens meant that for the first time women had access to and control over a part of the household income. Women reported how this helped to challenge gender stereotypes and show that they too can manage economic activities and not merely be the recipients of social investments.

Project interventions to free up women's time from burdensome domestic chores potentially enabled women to invest time and energy in training, building and cultivating the productive backyards.

Sustainability: Owing to the small-scale and relative ease of management of the backyard gardens they have favourable cost-benefit ratios and are likely to remain economically viable in the long-term. They nevertheless still require financial and technical support to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability.

Success factors: Improving access to water was essential for the success of the backyard gardens and other gender-related activities. Water was

identified as the first priority for the majority of councils and investing in water tanks by the project was an approach to build trust with the communities and involve them in other activities. Participatory processes were another key success factor helping to identify women's needs and then adapt investments accordingly. Training also proved vital to improve women's productive activities and political empowerment. Nurseries were set-up to produce seedlings for use in the backyard gardens. Multiple complementary investments in backyard gardens, water provision, small livestock, training and participatory community development processes to reduce poverty and improve gender equality created synergy where the whole (overall positive impact) was greater than the sum of its parts (outcomes from individual activities).

Agents of change: The Project Coordination Unit included a gender expert to oversee gender mainstreaming, although there are no reports of how this contributed to gender-related activities. The mid-term review of IFAD reinforced the emphasis on gender equality in the project.

Limitations: The backyard gardens address the symptoms of women's limited ability to produce and purchase sufficient and diverse foods but not

the cause of deeper discriminatory norms and processes, such as perhaps poor access to farm land. In a minority of the backyard gardens, the quality of works had been poor, reportedly due to a lack of sufficient time to implement these activities. For instance, a soil study before building the water tanks could have prevented cracks in the tanks in some areas and demonstrations and training on how to best use the irrigation system for water efficiency could have maximized its benefits. There was a budget line allocated for gender-related investment activities but although some of it was used to recruit a gender expert, the rest was allocated to other investment lines of the project.

Country	Burkina Faso	CASE STUDY
Project name	Sustainable Rural Development Programme (PDRD)	
Implementation period	2004-2014	
Project type	Agricultural development	
Main documents	PCRV	

Context: In 2011, Burkina Faso ranked 115 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.6153 (ranking 76 in economic participation, 77 in political empowerment, 98 in health and survival and 129 in educational attainment). The project area was characterized by a sharp rise in poverty indicators and a deterioration in food security indicators, as well as poor access to basic social services and to financial services. They were also exposed to the greatest threat in terms of desertification. The factors which sustain and reinforce gender inequality in Burkina Faso are several, including in particular the failure to implement gender responsive laws and the predominance of discriminatory gender customs. Poor rural women lacked access to knowledge and skills.

Strategy: The target group was composed of some 440,000 people living in 374 villages. They were small-scale farmers, landless migrants, women and youth with rudimentary living conditions.

A gender strategy was prepared and included targeting communities where vulnerable women were in the majority.

Activity/ies: Financial literacy in combination with training on business management and credit and income-generating activities. Other project activities that targeted women were vegetable gardens, water infrastructure and gender sensitization in the community.

Outputs: The project reached 416,000 people (including farmers, public service staff and project staff), out of which 67 per cent were women and 85 per cent were youth (disaggregation between young men and women not available). Training and sensitisation on gender issues was undertaken in collaboration with the regional offices for the promotion of women (Directions Régionales de la Promotion de la Femme). Women were the main beneficiaries of vegetable gardens (53 per cent) and 10,000 women and young people (70 per cent

women) received training in areas such as business management and credit and income-generating activities.

A total of 9,017 farmers (84 per cent women) participated in functional literacy training (compared to a quota of 60 per cent). In 2013, 27 per cent of women respondents and 4 per cent of men respondents declared themselves literate compared to 15 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively, in 2007. By project completion, 182 boreholes had been built. Around 624 hectares of land were developed for vegetable gardens, benefiting 26,573 individuals, of whom more than half were women.

Impact: The lives of women and their families changed thanks to improved financial literacy and expanded livelihood options. For example, women produced vegetables in the gardens (around the water points) that were supported by the project contributing to a more diverse diet in households. Furthermore, women's contribution to the household economy became more visible and helped them improve their image and position. The project's impact on women's access to and control of income (from income-generating activities) is not clear.

Sustainability: Adopting an approach which positioned IFAD as a facilitator and the rural people themselves as actual 'doers' is said to have catalysed change and supported sustainable interventions.

Success factors: The participatory self-evaluation approach which the project established at community level, was reported as a success. 63 villages benefited from monitoring and evaluation support and were organized to carry out self-evaluations, using a tool called the Tree of Truth (l'arbre de la vérité). In addition, a total of 1,198 focal points were trained (two women and one man per village) to facilitate/moderate discussions on topics of public interest, leading to 752 sessions and involving close to 78,000 people. The approach was successful because it transferred knowledge and skills to beneficiaries directly, leaving them with capacity to track, and also own the project.

The project provided gender sensitization training for men and women in the communities, raising a critical mass of men and women gender "change champions". After the training, they had the information and skills to promote gender equality and women's empowerment at the community

level. This was undertaken in partnership with the regional offices.

Agents of change: Regional offices to Promote Women (*Directions Régionales de la Promotion de la Femme*).

Limitations: In spite of literacy training and broad sensitization to gender equality within the communities, women's representation in local rural institutions was still weak by project completion. This may limit their ability to voice their needs and priorities in the community and influence decision-making.



Sarisaina Wilco

Country	Burundi	CASE STUDY
Project name	Rural Recovery and Development Programme (PRDMR)	
Implementation period	1999-2011	
Project type	Rural development	
Main documents	PPA	

Context: In 2011, Burundi ranked 24 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.727 (ranking 4 in economic participation, 32 in political empowerment, 98 in health and survival and 119 in educational attainment). Yet Burundi is one of the poorest countries of the world. After 10 years of conflict, worsened by a regional economic embargo and a freeze on aid by development partners at the end of the 1990s, the productive assets in the country were decimated. The economy is highly dependent on agriculture (35 per cent of GDP and 87 per cent of exports).

Strategy: The project aimed to enable the rural poor and their communities to develop and implement sustainable individual and collective strategies to overcome what they perceived as the main obstacles to improving food security and income. It also aimed to reduce the pressure on livelihoods that had so persistently contributed to social tension. The project aimed to improve

women's social status through project components on community development and socio-economic infrastructure development. Gender considerations are less apparent in the components on natural resource development and conservation and on-farm agriculture support. Women and women-headed households were identified as important sub-target groups in the project targeting strategy.

Activity/ies: Project activities targeting women and men or women in particular included participatory planning through community development committees (CDCs) and the training involved (on accounting, the role of CDCs, understanding the institutional context, conflict resolution, and how to target beneficiaries), the literacy programme, sensitization to women's rights, women-leader networks, traditional community conflict resolution (Bashingantahe), family development centres, social infrastructure (drinking water supplies and health centres) and supporting the bovine value chains and fruit markets.

Outputs: The community-driven development approach was initially met with some resistance but it was later rolled out across the country. The Government issued a decree in which the CDCs were legally recognized in composition, mission and function. In collaboration with other donors, including ACORD, Action Aid, and GTZ (German Technical Cooperation Agency) the project contributed to formulating a national guide to community planning.

The project supported the establishment of 799 collines (hill development committees) with 8,933 members and 33 communal committees for community development with 822 members. Women represented around 30 per cent of the members. Through the participatory planning process 33 communal plans for community development and four provincial community development plans were elaborated, representing the intervention priorities identified by the communes. Those plans contributed to the mobilization of external financing from development partners and supported coordination and equitable distribution. One province saw 50 per cent of women leaders becoming members of hill development councils. In total 845 women became rural leaders, dealing with women's issues

in the post-conflict context and they had earned respect at the community level.

Other outputs included family development centres created in 4 project area provinces and 33 communes, health care facilities built serving 62,632 people, drinking water supplies for 23,639 people and latrines built in schools serving 24,750 students (data not disaggregated by gender).

In the literacy programme, 880 literacy trainers were recruited and trained (compared to a target of 379), 513 literacy trainers were retrained (compared to a target of 379); 62,485 literacy students (of whom 43,115 were women) enrolled (compared to a target of 43,000), 50,437 students became more literate (compared to a target of 38,700) and 39,889 students were certified literate (compared to a target of 34,400).

Impacts: Women have improved their decision-making roles in community affairs and their representation in local institutions. Women now present themselves in local elections and are chosen to lead in development committees, such as the hill development committees, and as administrators. The number of women members and administrators of committees has

grown. In 2001, there were no female communal administrators, in 2005 this had risen to 8, then 12 out of 33 communes by 2010. Furthermore, women-leader networks were effective and worked alongside Bashingantahes and hill development committees in conflict resolution. The emergence of rural women leaders has greatly contributed to changing the status of women within the communities and has helped to address issues concerning women and child protection. They play an important role in dealing with social conflicts and the sensitization of communities on women's rights and gender equality.

Literacy training is reported to have improved women's access to income-generating activities (including sewing, basket making, milling, veterinary pharmacy, petty trade, etc.) and overall economic situation.

Family development centres evolved to provide social and legal assistance to families improving social cohesion. Women expressed themselves more freely and did not hesitate to protect their interests.

Through the success of multiple activities targeting women's needs and priorities, women reported

improved self-esteem, more control over family assets (especially land) alongside their husbands, improved confidence to voice their concerns in meetings and generally, greater respect shown from within the community.

Sustainability: By focusing its approach on participatory community development, the programme contributed significantly to addressing the issues of ownership and local capacity building – crucial conditions for sustainability. The programme has put in place several management units at the local level that can continue with the participatory planning, provided they continue receiving the support from the decentralized governmental structures, which is likely given the legal recognition of the community development approach. A challenge to the sustainability of CDCs is the bringing in of new members who benefited less from project training and sensitization. Follow-up projects supported by IFAD could continue to support the CDCs. The income-generating activities supported by the women-leaders networks still required institutional support by project completion. Another potential issue was that literacy trainers and women leaders worked on a voluntary basis and without project support their motivation to continue could falter.

Success factors: Community development project designed and implemented in a highly participatory manner. Rural men and women played a key role in defining the pace and direction during implementation. The project addressed multiple dimensions of vulnerability and poverty (women-led households; families with small land-holdings; families without monetary income; families who have suffered violence).

Agents of change: The rural women leaders and the CDCs.

Limitations: It is reported that women did not benefit from any direct support in the area of agricultural production (crop, livestock production) despite the fact that they are the heads of one third of the households. Reports lack gender disaggregated data at impact level and general information on how gender-related activities functioned.

Country	Chad	CASE STUDY
Project name	Kanem Rural Development Project	
Implementation period	2000-2012	
Project type	Rural development	
Main documents	PCRV	

Context: In 2011, Sri Lanka ranked 134 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.5334 (ranking 98 in economic participation, 107 in political empowerment, 111 in health and survival and 135 in educational attainment). Chad remains one of the world’s poorest countries. Poverty is most severe in rural areas. About 80 per cent of the population depend on farming or herding or gathering forest products for a livelihood (UNDP Human Development Report, 2012). Women form the backbone of the rural economy. They work in the fields and tend livestock, and they are also responsible for most household chores. As a result of mortality and male migration, women now outnumber men, and about 23 per cent of households are headed by women (ibid). These households are particularly vulnerable to poverty.

Strategy: The project’s main objective was to improve the incomes and food security of poor households in the region. One of the four project

objectives was to provide specific support to women and young people through income-generating activities. However, women were also targeted in relation to the other project objectives to: develop sustainable microfinance services, empower the target populations and their organizations and increase agricultural productivity. Gender issues are not clearly mainstreamed throughout the project logic and operations but they are targeted through several activities.

Activity/ies: Activities to improve gender equality comprised participatory village development plans, livelihoods’ training, drinking-water supply infrastructure, literacy and agricultural extension services. Other project activities included developing microfinance services and irrigation.

Outputs: The project was implemented over 3.5 years instead of 8 following the early closure of the project owing to major difficulties. The

project reached 9 per cent or 8,560 people out of the planned 95,000 people. Village development plans were prepared in 147 out of 158 villages selected. This helped beneficiaries to better understand their own needs for development (the extent to which women's participation was promoted and supported is not clear). In addition, 63 Ouadis development plans and 21 inter-village development plans were made but not implemented. In 2008/2009, the project put in place the necessary conditions to start a vast literacy training programme (needs identification, training of trainers, preparation of training material, facilities refurbished) and successfully started implementing literacy training (with higher numbers of women participants than expected) until the project closed soon after. Agricultural extension auxiliaries numbering 164 were trained, of whom 50 per cent were women. Thirty-six out of a target of 45 artisans for rural hydraulic infrastructure received training and a total of 50 boreholes and 31 wells were constructed/rehabilitated.

Impact: The impact of project activities is not clear beyond the output level. A few of the project activities implemented were reported to have raised household incomes for some of the

beneficiaries: women in women's groups that received training in small livestock production (chicken, goats) and the storage of onions; as well as local craftsmen who were trained on borehole drilling, well construction and the repair of motor pumps; input providers who were given interest free loans; and local farmers who participated in tests on irrigation techniques and vegetable production.

Sustainability: It appears that women benefited from the improved water infrastructure, training in small livestock, literacy training and village development plans. With the early closure of the project owing to major difficulties in implementation, these activities were unlikely to be sustained.

Success factors: In the challenging context of rural Chad, the participatory process through which the development plans emerged was an important success.

Agents of change: Unclear.

Limitations: Implementation period of three years instead of eight. An overambitious and complex project design and weak implementation

capacity of the project management unit were in part responsible for the weak performance of the project. A few interventions aimed to tackle some of the underlying causes of gender inequality and women's poverty but overall the project was too complex and demanding given the local context.



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Country	Ecuador	CASE STUDY
Project name	Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian Development Project (PRODEPINE)	
Implementation period	1997-2005	
Project type	Rural development	
Main documents	Country programme evaluation (CPE)	

Context: In 2011, Ecuador ranked 45 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.7035 (ranking 99 in economic participation, 29 in political empowerment, 58 in health and survival and 77 in educational attainment). In Ecuador there are high levels of gender-based violence with 6 out of 10 women having suffered some type of violence. Almost all women (98 per cent) provide the unpaid labour at home and many also in agriculture (48 per cent), limiting their income and influence in decision-making. Women also work much longer hours than men per week. Women, especially of Afro-Ecuadorians and indigenous ethnicity, experience barriers to entry into the labour market and receive lower remuneration than other social groups, even when they have equal levels of education and experience. In recent years many rural men have migrated away from rural areas, leaving women behind to perform more of the productive activities. Indigenous societies are strongly patriarchal and women are largely

illiterate. Indigenous women lack access to capital to improve farming, invest in small enterprises and support their family.

Since 2008 Ecuador's new legal and constitutional framework includes important advances in gender related issues but implementation of this in processes on the ground is limited. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries is currently incorporating issues of inclusion and gender equity into the sectoral policy on small-scale agriculture.

Strategy: The project lacked a robust gender strategy from project design.

Activity/ies: There has been improved access to rural financial services through *cajas solidarias* (savings and credit groups) for indigenous women's groups. The groups were created to access the funds, which provided them with seed capital. The capital was administered by the women

themselves and then repaid with interest. Initial training was given.

Outputs: A total of 150 *cajas solidarias* were planned, while 626 were created and 59 were still operational at project completion. The 59 funds still operational were reportedly highly successful and empowering for the indigenous women involved. The indigenous women's groups became platforms and spaces for women to develop their capacities and obtain access to credit for the first time.

Impacts: The *cajas solidarias* were an unprecedented development in the country and in highly patriarchal communities, and contributed to the social and economic empowerment of many women, especially indigenous women. They benefited from increased self-esteem and influence over decision-making at home thanks to their own independent source of income. The women also reported being able to help their children finish school and not have to sell small livestock to assist in cases of economic emergencies. At the community level, women have gained respect through their organizations, are consulted for important decisions in the community, and have been asked for advice from neighbouring

communities on setting up and managing the *cajas solidarias*. The creation of indigenous women's groups to access the funds was considered a successful breakthrough in the country.

Sustainability: Many funds stopped working owing to the high levels of illiteracy among indigenous women and a lack of technical support from local and national institutions.

Success factors: The sustainability of the 59 operational funds was due to several factors, including support from more literate family members such as husbands (and in one association university-educated daughters) with accounting, treasury and presenting reports. The funds were also supported by indigenous organizations, local institutions and the Nations and Peoples of Ecuador Development Council (CODENPE). The CODENPE started a registry of the funds, legalized them under a new legal framework and provided them with technical assistance and support, although it is not clear if this continues today.

Agents of change: Indigenous organizations, local institutions and the CODENPE.

Limitations: The project lacked a robust gender strategy from project design, gender was not sufficiently institutionalized in the project management unit and not enough resources were allocated to gender-related activities. For example, minimal IFAD funds (3 per cent) were allocated to implementing the *cajas solidarias*. There was a high turnover of gender staff in the project management unit so the benefits from awareness raising and training in gender issues and *cajas solidarias* were lost. Without timely follow up and technical support from local and national institutions, many funds stopped working. The project impact on Afro-Ecuadorian women is unclear.

Country	Ghana	CASE STUDY
Project name	Rural Enterprises Project, phase II (REP II)	
Implementation period	2002-2014	
Project type	Research/extension/training	
Main documents	PCRVA and CPE	

Context: In 2011, Ghana ranked 70 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index with a score of 0.6811 (ranking 17 in economic participation, 91 in political empowerment, 104 in health and survival and 111 in educational attainment). Major factors that cause persistent gender inequality in Ghana include: the absence of sufficient social protection mechanisms for women; some customary beliefs; as well as geographic disparities (poverty is more pervasive in the northern part of the country than the south). Restrictions on women’s access to, control of and ownership over resources are highlighted regularly in various country reports as a major concern among women in Ghana.

Strategy: The project’s overall goal is to build competitive micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in rural areas in eight of Ghana’s ten regions through the provision of good-quality, easily accessible and sustainable services, as well as appropriate

training for poor rural people. The project is also reported to have focused on “increasing the incomes of women and vulnerable groups through increased self- and wage employment in Ghana”. An identified sub-target group was “socially disadvantaged women”, including women-headed households. Gender analysis was incorporated in the community profiles undertaken during the design of REP II.

Activity/ies: Rural financial services and the targeting of women owned MSEs. Other project activities included “Technology Promotion and Support to Apprentices Training” through the establishment of rural technology facilities in selected districts. Training was provided in business development, rural finance, technology transfer and promotion, partnership-building and policy dialogue, and project management.

Outputs: Overall, 62 per cent of project beneficiaries were women and 44 per cent were youth (no distinction was made between young men and women). Women comprised 64.7 per cent of training participants under business development services and 51.1 per cent of training in apprentices, but only 9.4 per cent of training participants in master crafts and 8.7 per cent in training of participating financial institutions staff - representing the gender ceiling in professional roles related to the limited educational opportunities for women. It is notable however that women comprised 60.5 per cent of the new business operators, 66.8 per cent of the MSE operators receiving loans, 65.9 per cent of the MSE operators linked to larger commercial enterprises, 59.2 per cent of the clients operating active bank accounts and 61.6 per cent of the people in new paid employment. The new paid employment was created through the establishment of 25,139 new businesses. In terms of access to credit, the proportion of women to men borrowers notably improved from the first phase of the project (REP I), demonstrating that culture and practices in relation to gender are changing.

Impact: Results from a field survey involving 340 beneficiaries indicate that 92 per cent have higher incomes. They attribute this in part to the expansion of their businesses as well as improved managerial skills and access to other support services received from the project. Average incomes were around GH¢455.00 before enrolling in the REP and GH¢755.00 after participating in the project – an increase of 66 per cent.

The project successfully promoted gender equality and women's empowerment in two ways: One, the business support they received helped increase their income, which gave them greater freedom within the household as well as more respect in their household and the community. They used the increased income for household needs, including health, education and food for the family, but also reinvested it in their own businesses and in other income-generating activities for the household, such as farming or apprenticeships for children. Second, women were empowered through improved financial literacy and by forming producer groups, thus finding collective support among themselves and empowering them beyond the group itself.

The men confirmed that they were appreciative of the women's stronger role in providing for the household.

With improved and more equal access to financial resources many women reported feeling more secure about their families' well-being. The new sense of self-assuredness had created more opportunities for the future. An evaluator concludes that "even a small impact in financial terms can have a substantial impact on women's empowerment".

To a minimal degree, men were supported to engage in entrepreneurship roles traditionally considered for women and vice versa. For example, men undertook training in soap-making and women in metal work (how this affected the subsequent activities of men and women is not reported).

Sustainability: The communities themselves helped decide the structure and composition of MSE committees, which helped foster a sense of ownership. The role of these committees was to mainstream MSE development in the local government system, organize rotational trade

shows and participate in the development of industrial estates. Another sustainable result was the law and policy reforms that happened at local government level. The latter led to the integration of business advisory centres and rural technology facilities into local government structures. While this would need to be monitored closely for its impact on women, the fact that it targets improved access for micro entrepreneurs within the committees creates room for more women to be reached.

Success factors: Ownership and participation by poor rural people and local institutions and having innovative practices embedded within local policy frameworks have been key to the sustainability of project results. A stable socio-economic country context, strong participation and involvement by the district assemblies from project design to monitoring and evaluation and the strength and coherence of IFAD's implementing team were also important factors driving impact and sustainability. It is also reported that the existence of strong matriarchal norms and customary beliefs helped bring about changes in gender roles and responsibilities at home and in the community. Another success factor may be the

long-term support to enterprise development in Ghana by IFAD from REP I to the currently under implementation REP III (spanning from 1992 to the present day and planned until 2019).

Agents of change: Local stakeholders including the district assemblies and the MSE sub-committees within the district authorities.

Limitations: The promotion of women's involvement in decision-making occurred through the Business Advisory Centre staff and MSE Committee training, but the evaluation team reported that the Project Coordination and Monitoring Unit would have benefited from having a gender specialist in its team, rather than only a gender focal point (less specialized).



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Country	India	CASE STUDY
Project name	Livelihoods Improvement Project in the Himalayas	
Implementation period	2003-2013	
Project type	Credit and financial services	
Main documents	PPA	

Context: In 2011, India ranked 113 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.619 (ranking 131 in economic participation, 19 in political empowerment, 134 in health and survival and 121 in educational attainment). Gender relations were different in the two states where the Project was operational. Meghalaya was dominated by a matrilineal tribe, with problems of illiteracy, broken marriages, divorce, unwed mothers, early marriage and male drunkenness. In Uttar Pradesh, the poorest were the Scheduled Castes and women among them. Gender relations were more hierarchical and the division of labour more marked (not specified). In both states, many rural women spent much of their day on laborious domestic and productive work. They used agricultural tools that were not appropriate for their height.

Strategy: The project first aimed to reduce women’s workload and then support their economic empowerment and their influence in decision-making. Marginalised women and

women-headed households in Uttarakhand and Meghalaya were important target groups. While the goals, objectives and components of the project did not explicitly refer to gender equality and women’s empowerment, the interventions were in keeping with IFAD’s policy on this subject. The project activities were also largely in keeping with the Draft National Policy of Women, 2016, of the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Activity/ies: Labour-saving technologies to reduce the burden of unpaid, time consuming and inefficient domestic and productive work. In Meghalaya the focus was mainly on improving existing water sources and on increasing the availability of rice mills to reduce the time and effort required to fetch water and shell rice. In Uttarakhand a broader range of drudgery-reduction activities were employed to free up women’s time. Examples of these activities included light weight pitchers for drinking-water collection, fodder production, improved fire wood sources and a range of improved agricultural and

post-harvest implements, including threshers, power tillers and chaff cutters. Complementary activities involved the sensitisation of men to gender issues, the formation of women into self-help groups and forming them into federation/clusters, strengthening women's literacy and access to financial services, capacity building for enterprises/market linkages and the promotion of value chains.

Output: Drudgery reduction interventions have reduced the time spent by women on household chores by five hours a day, for example through motorized wheat threshers (reducing threshing time by 96 per cent) and Napier grass production (reducing women's time spent collecting fodder by 60 per cent). The effectiveness of the light-weight water pitcher vastly exceeded original expectations: the project 'demonstrated' this technology to just over 1,900 households and it was eventually adopted by over 12,000 households. A number of self-help groups and federations began selling the pitchers in surrounding areas as a commercial venture.

Impact: The reduction of women's workload freed up women's time to engage in income generation activities, decision making platforms and literacy

classes. In Uttarakhand 93 per cent of women reported that their say in managing household income had increased. The increased income in the hands of women is reported to have led to better health and education for children and improved food security for the household. In Uttarakhand some self-help groups have turned the new technologies into a business opportunity, benefiting other women as well – for example the water pitchers not only reduced the time and energy spent on carrying water but were also promoted and sold by self-help groups to other women in the area.

Improved access to water and sanitation is reported to have improved the health of women, girls as well as family members. At project completion, 58 per cent of households had their own toilet, an improvement of 20 per cent over control households.

The reduction of women's heavy domestic and productive workload is reported to have greatly contributed to the overall impact of the project in the two states. In Uttar Pradesh, only 1-2 per cent of households reported food shortages, compared to 18 per cent before the project. In Meghalaya, the comparative figures were 5 per cent down from

44 per cent. In Meghalaya under-nourishment figures improved from 36 per cent at the start of the project to 20 per cent for boys, and from 31 per cent to 19 per cent for girls. Women report that they have more of a say in intra household, village and apex body decision-making.

Seventy-two per cent of women report that their role in household decision-making had increased significantly compared to eight years ago. Men's acceptance of women's changing roles is possibly an indicator of transformation. Women reported that their sense of self-worth had increased.

Sustainability: Providing repairs and maintenance can be done locally, it was assessed that the labour-saving technologies and their enabling effect on women's empowerment were likely to be sustained.

Success factors: The strategy to first reduce drudgery for rural women, freeing up time and energy for subsequent activities to economically empower women at home and collectively. Investment in gender sensitization of men. The mainstreaming of gender issues into economic development. The use of non-governmental organizations and strengthening their capacity including on gender. Gender training for all

agencies involved in the implementation of the project.

Agents of change: Self-help groups helped to capitalize on the time saved by women.

Limitations: It is not clear if the project successfully targeted women-headed households in both states and unwed mothers in Meghalaya and Schedule Caste women in Uttarakhand, all previously identified as important sub-target groups. Overall, the targeting strategy was reported as weak in Uttarakhand where the government's poverty list was adopted. The issue of violence against women and male alcoholism does not appear to have been addressed.

Many demonstrations of new or improved technologies were judged as unsuccessful owing to low rates of adoption. The main causes were high start-up costs coupled with insufficient return on investment. Technologies demonstrated by the project either cost too much to establish (cattle troughs or large water harvesting tanks for example) or people had no way of repaying the original investment. A lack of technical support to back up some of the demonstrations was also suggested as a contributing factor to the limited success of some technologies.

Country	Mongolia	CASE STUDY
Project name	Rural Poverty Reduction Programme	
Implementation period	2002-2011	
Project type	Rural development	
Main documents	PPA	

Context: In 2011, Mongolia ranked 36 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.714 (ranking 3 in economic participation, 125 in political empowerment, 1 in health and survival and 47 in educational attainment). Incidence of early marriage was low at 4 per cent. The reasons for gender inequality, exclusion and discrimination in the pastoral communities included the low asset base (livestock) of women headed households and a lack of access to credit and collective decision spaces. A general issue affecting poor households is the long and inhospitable winter that limits fodder available for livestock and the variety in people's diets and requires families to work hard during the brief summer.

Strategy: The project did not mainstream gender throughout the whole project - long term goals and overall objectives of the project do not refer to women in general, women's empowerment or gender equality. The project does however include

a component on social development, including women in development, in addition to four other components. "Women in development" aimed to increase women's access to skills, credit, income and health/literacy and free up women's time through kindergarten services. The loan agreement specified that the government should ensure that 50 per cent per cent of programme managers should be women.

Approximately 15 per cent of households in the project area were single women with children. These were identified as very vulnerable because of their inferior social and economic standing, and the project's aim was to include them as a significant part of the target group.

Activity/ies: Mobile kindergartens were provided each accommodating approximately 25 children, aged 2 to 7 years old, to performing activities in readiness for the long winter to free up time for mothers and to a lesser extent fathers. The

kindergartens were also in response to the pressing (felt) need for early childhood education. The parents set up the ger (tent) and provided food. They picked up their children each day around 19.00.

Outputs: Since 2004, the IFAD-supported mobile kindergartens have served more than 29,000 children in 79 villages (compared to a target of 73) in four of the country's poorest provinces. Preschool activities increased by 76 per cent (although this value may also include sedentary kindergartens).

Impact: Mobile kindergartens enabled parents to conduct much needed work in preparation for the harsh winter. Parents had time to milk animals, process dairy products, grow vegetables and earn a bit of income. It is not clear if this led to improved food and nutrition security and increased economic activities performed by women.

Sustainability: The Government department of health and education and the World Bank are reported to have continued or replicated the mobile kindergarten services.

Success factors: Directly addressing the serious time constraints of rural women that limited food and nutrition security.

Agents of change: 50 per cent of programme management personnel were women, in line with the project design. The IFAD Mid Term Review ensured a greater focus on the sub-target group of poor women headed households.

Limitations: Only 3 per cent of the budget was allotted to the sub-component on Women in Development and of that, 15 per cent was unspent.

Country	Rwanda	CASE STUDY
Project name	Rural Small and Microenterprise Promotion Project Phase II (PPMER II)	
Implementation period	2003-2013	
Project type	Rural development	
Main documents	CPE and PCRV	

Context: In 2014, Rwanda ranked 7 out of 142 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.785 (ranking 25 in economic participation, 6 in political empowerment, 118 in health and survival and 114 in educational attainment).⁸ Further, while gender gaps are low in the economic sphere, the level of poverty of women and men is high. In rural areas and in agriculture, women play a particularly important role but need access to resources, inputs, capacities and markets. The CPE observes that 27 per cent of households in Rwanda are headed by women, and these households are not only vulnerable to poverty, but exploitation.

Strategy: The project was designed to deal with the most vulnerable, which, in the particular context of Rwanda included women, women headed households, households headed by children and

orphans. The gender focus was therefore strong from the outset. The project aimed in particular at providing off-farm income opportunities and group leadership positions to women, particularly for women-/child-headed households and orphans. Participatory approaches were applied to both recovering communities (in post-conflict context) and local government structures for the purpose of social reconstruction and enhanced cohesion.

Activity/ies: The project sought to create value chains in coffee and in particular to brand the coffee of women producers, “cafés des femmes”, and link it to the fair trade market. Project components were capacity-building, support to rural SMEs, and support to microfinance institutions.

⁸ Data for 2011 to 2013 was not available for Rwanda.

Outputs: The CPE observes that women were more than half of the apprentices trained in management, marketing and accounting related to enterprises in the project.

Impact: Microenterprise interventions (PPPMER II) have reached out to the poor rural women and expanded their access to markets and income. Linkages were made between women coffee producers and fair trade organizations and gourmet markets for organic coffee. *Café des femmes* fetched a high price on the market. Women coffee producers' income increased (no data provided).

Overall, the project has strengthened human capacity through community mobilization, animation, literacy training, and skills transfer with the objective to open up additional off-farm income opportunities for the target group, develop functional businesses (microenterprises and cooperatives) and skills development capacities in rural areas (services providers). Capacities were developed within the public sector, to transfer technologies, business skills, mentoring and start-up capital to microenterprises including economic common interest groups and cooperatives. Capacity-building efforts have also targeted

private sector operators (individuals and groups) involved in apprenticeship and business training. As such, individuals and group leaders were both the main recipients and the main provider of capacity-building efforts. More importantly, the project contributed to changing people's mindset to be more business oriented. They are able to recognize opportunities and to develop strategies to start a business or to improve and further develop existing ones. Women and the youth have greatly benefited from these advances. Particularly good progress was achieved in the mobilization, conduct and confidence of microenterprises and cooperatives, though few have reached self-sufficiency. The project's impact on social cohesion is undeniable.

Sustainability: Not clear from project reports.

Success factors: Investing in apprenticeship training, microfinance and organizing women. Further details are required on what conditions the micro-enterprises worked under. The high economic participation and decision-making of women to begin with may be a contributing factor. The project achieved near parity in women's participation as a result of mainstreaming gender considerations in all aspects of project design and

implementation. At design, it was anticipated that 30 per cent of the project beneficiaries would be women, but this target was surpassed to 50 per cent.

Agents of change: Not clear. The 2007 COSOP may have provided direction and a good starting point by emphasizing the need to target women-headed household, women's participation in projects, women's decision-making and microenterprise activities.

Limitations: The project almost exclusively focused on the collection of physical output data, while impact monitoring received little to no attention (owing to a weak monitoring and evaluation system) making it difficult to evaluate performance. The CPE noted that the reduction in women's workload was prioritized in some projects and not others, but that in the Rwandan context more work is needed in this area.

Country	Senegal	CASE STUDY
Project name	Agricultural Development Project in Matam – Phase II (PRODAM II)	
Implementation period	2003-2013	
Project type	Rural development	
Main documents	CPE, PCRV and project completion report	

Context: In 2011, Senegal ranked 92 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index with a score of 0.6573 (ranking 47 in economic participation, 58 in political empowerment, 80 in health and survival and 123 in educational attainment). Illiteracy is more common among women (62 per cent) and overall in rural areas (68.2 per cent). The gross enrolment rate at the elementary school level has increasingly risen from 69.4 per cent in 2001 to 82.5 per cent in 2005, with a rate of primary school completion of 44. per cent. The presence of women in decision-making positions in producer organizations in Senegal remains low. Gender-based violence is a serious issue in Senegal.

Strategy: Gender considerations were mainstreamed into project components and operations. Activities that promoted gender equality and women’s empowerment included the Regional Gender Observatory, literacy training,

rural financial services and vegetable plots managed by women’s groups and young people.

Activity/ies: Gender observatories at regional and sub-regional levels were created to enable development actors to regularly assess gender issues and exchange relevant information.

Outputs: The observatories helped address issues of violence against women and promoted respect for women. Women and men community leaders volunteered to act as champions and support women’s rights proactively (through community education, especially around International Women’s Day and other initiatives). Moreover, they were sought out for support when incidences of violence or discrimination occurred. They also worked hard to ensure that follow up of abused individuals was carried out by the State.

Impact: The impact of the observatories is not clearly reported (in the CPE, PCRV, PCR).

Sustainability: The Ministry of Women, Children and Women's entrepreneurship wanted to replicate and scale up the Observatory model to a national level.

Success factors: Ability to recruit volunteers.

Agents of change (regarding the strong mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment in the whole country portfolio): The projects in the portfolio benefited from a full-time person working on gender-related issues (as well as monitoring and evaluation and communication). In addition, a regional resource person in IFAD's Country Office provided support and monitoring of gender issues in projects. The regional gender focal point was important for the coherence of the country programme. She participated in supervision missions which helped identify lessons regarding the inclusion of women and young people.

Limitations: Lack of evidence of impact.

Country	Sri Lanka	CASE STUDY
Project name	Dry Zone Livelihood Support and Partnerships Programme	
Implementation period	2004-2014	
Project type	Agricultural development	
Main documents	Impact evaluation and PCRV	

Context: In 2011, Sri Lanka ranked 31 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.7212 (ranking 102 in economic participation, 7 in political empowerment, 1 in health and survival and 103 in educational attainment). The impact evaluation and PCRV do not provide any information on issues regarding gender equality prior to the project.

Strategy: The project design included a well-defined gender strategy. Women were an integral part of the target group and some activities were to be undertaken nearly exclusively by them. Project activities covered the three main areas of the IFAD Gender Plan of Action.

Activity/ies: The “*Apeksha*” and the “*Bhagya*” microfinance schemes with subsidized interest rates and support to income-generating activities to increase incomes generated by the rural poor, in particular women. Other project activities included marketing and enterprise development,

rainfed upland agricultural development, irrigation rehabilitation and community infrastructure development.

Outputs: The *Bhagya* scheme was implemented with the involvement of state and regional banks and with the supervision and provision of refinance facilities by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. The *Bhagya* scheme provided 4,651 loans to savings and credit groups (60 to 100 per cent of beneficiaries were women) at an interest rate of 10 per cent per annum and displayed an average recovery rate of around 90 per cent. The *Apeksha* scheme was operated by the Women’s Bureau and pre-existed the project. Under *Apeksha*, 2,714 loans were issued to savings and credit groups at an annual interest rate of 6 per cent. The demand was so high that by the impact evaluation more than 8,000 women were on the waiting list in Monaragala District alone where 887 women had been served to-date.

A total of US\$2 million was used as credit support by 962 groups for income-generating activities. A study of the programme estimated the average annual incremental income as US\$613 per beneficiary per year.

The project contributed to the development of grassroots networks at the village level, particularly through support to savings and credit groups, crop societies, dairy societies and the federations of these societies. In many of these, women held positions of responsibility. For example, women were strongly represented in crop societies, representing 56 per cent of all the members (43 per cent of the presidents; 64 per cent of the secretaries; 54 per cent of the treasurers). A total of 17,102 women and 20,335 men received extension services in major dry land crops.

The project also supported the construction of about 740 km of access roads, 120 community buildings and 113 drinking-water supply schemes.

Impact: The project's performance in gender equality and women's empowerment was assessed as highly satisfactory. Most loan beneficiaries were women (60–100 per cent) and women were strongly represented in terms of number and

responsibility in village level groups covering credit, crops and dairy.

Although women were the main beneficiaries of *Bhaghya* loans, men (husbands or sons) were often involved in some aspect of the enterprise financed by the loan. This set-up is reported to have strengthened cooperation between men and women in the family. The micro-finance schemes, groups and federations brought multiple benefits: improved social cohesion in rural areas; increased confidence of women as entrepreneurs and in their ability to engage with the formal banking sector; and more independence for women in household financial matters.

Improvements in the dairy value chain and community infrastructure, such as roads, pre-schools and drinking-water supplies, are reported to have benefited women but it is not explained how and to what extent.

Men and women repeatedly stressed that they worked together and equally in household management and income generation. For example, men and women commonly shared tasks including cooking, childcare, washing clothes at home and various aspects of cultivation, marketing

(milk) and household micro-enterprises. Reports do not explain the extent to which this behaviour differs from before the project.

Sustainability: The main issues concerning the sustainability of the Apeksha and Bhagya schemes were the availability of the revolving funds established and the adequacy of the funds available to meet the demand, respectively. The beneficiaries of both schemes will have had to eventually move on to standard loan schemes available with the banks, and the participating banks should have taken initiatives to attract the beneficiaries to such facilities.

Arrangements were made to maintain the renovated roads by linking users to local administrations to facilitate participatory maintenance. However, by the impact evaluation only 16 per cent of the community infrastructure was still operating successfully.

Success factors: Within the *Bhagya* loan scheme, the vast majority of groups formed were new, often made up of close friends, with high levels of trust and cooperation. This strengthened bonds between women (the majority of clients) solidarity guarantors of group loans and facilitated women's contact with local banks.

Agents of change: Village level groups and associations.

Limitations: The enterprise development component was not well linked to the credit schemes of *Bhagya* and *Apeksha*, limiting potential synergies.



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Country	Sudan	CASE STUDY
Project name	Gash Sustainable Livelihoods Regeneration Project (GSLRP)	
Implementation period	2003-2013	
Project type	Agricultural development	
Main documents	PPA	

Context: The formal economy of Sudan is composed of a mostly male workforce. The majority of women participate in agricultural activities, and most of them are making “unrecognized” contributions. More than three-quarters of Sudan’s female labour force is concentrated in agriculture. Of these, the vast majority are involved in subsistence farming and the minority in commercial farming. The majority of labour is performed by women and children. A major root cause of women’s exclusion from more productive activities and decision-making was the patriarchal belief system enforced by local men. The Hadendowa tribe in the project area was known to be conservative when it came to women’s participation in public issues.⁹

Strategy: The gender strategy is not clear from reports. It appears that gender was not mainstreamed throughout activities and

operations, but targeted efforts were made to address gender issues. The project targeted the poor based on five criteria: food self-sufficiency, livestock wealth, irrigated area under tenancy, reliance on aid for subsistence, and gender. The approach to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in the project was to improve women’s participation in public issues, empower them economically and in some cases reduce their workload through improved access to safe water.

Activity/ies: The project supported the establishment of CDCs at village level, including women-only groups. It also provided training and the facilitation of savings and lending groups from the community development committees. Complementary activities included training and capacity development on important livelihood activities.

⁹ Global Gender Gap Index data for Sudan from 2011 is unavailable.

Output: A total of 69 CDCs were established, including those with only women. Training was delivered to more than 15,000 people, of whom 59 per cent were women, covering various topics such as water management and sanitation, animal healthcare, group formation and management, food processing, business management, handicrafts and home vegetable gardens. The majority (78 per cent) of the 77 women interviewed claimed to have benefited from the skills acquired and the promotion and creation of 95 savings and lending groups (with a total membership of 2,094 people, of whom 96 per cent were women). Through the women's savings and lending groups, women accumulated savings and were able to borrow from the bank for farm and non-farm income-generating activities.

Impact: Given the conservative nature of the Hadandowa tribe regarding women's participation in public issues, the project interventions had a significant impact. The CDCs provided a platform for women to influence community development priorities and also enabled them to form cooperative groups. The participation of women in the CDCs, either in women-only or mixed committees, became acceptable to 75 per cent

of men interviewed compared to 23 per cent before the project. Interviewees considered that women's participation in the project activities in general had led to several benefits, including more hygienic and healthy household environments; improved family diet; improved child health; increased enrolment and regular attendance of pupils; increased family income and the contribution of women in financing agriculture, children education expenses, and improvement in household furniture and equipment.

There was a significant effort made to challenge established gender beliefs and norms especially within the 'community development, empowerment and capacity building' component of the project. As a result of benefits to the community which came from women's participation in project activities 64 per cent of community members indicated they had become comfortable with women's participation in leadership and decision-making within the community. The women met by the PPA mission reported there had been no problems with their husbands about their participation in training activities.

The women trainees confirmed that after training, their husbands and men in general started to appreciate the role of women in community economic and social activities as well as in family life. Some women confirmed that their husbands began to entrust them with management of the household budget. There was also supporting evidence of gender gains in areas like credit access. Women in savings and lending groups almost unanimously indicated that, with multiple loans of progressively increasing amounts supporting growing and diversifying income-generating activities, they were able to purchase household assets (such as furniture, which is not included in the above list), as well as small ruminants.

Long held traditional and religious beliefs about male headship and dominance underscore the project's impressive achievement in terms of being able to influence women's increased voice in the sphere of community leadership and decision-making.

Sustainability: Two main factors supported sustainability. One was the grounding of gender issues in community structures (committees and groups) which was an attempt to institutionalize project approaches by integrating them into local

governance processes. The other factor was the project approach to transfer knowledge and skills rather than implement directly. IFAD in this case, played the role of a facilitator whose main task was to equip beneficiaries with the information, structure and tools required to keep doing the work whether or not IFAD's support continued.

Success factors: There are two main reasons reported behind the success of the CDCs. The first was that women's participation was very clearly linked to the common good. There was broad based buy-in to their participation because it was proven that individual households and also the community in general were better off for it. Secondly, the conversations that were held with local men and leaders - "the gatekeepers of customs" - discuss whether they were comfortable with women's participation in decision-making showed cultural sensitivity and created space to advocate for women's participation.

Agents of change: The CDCs; and the village development committees. These provided a platform for women to influence community development priorities and also enabled them to form cooperative groups. The male community leaders were also instrumental in GEWE related change.

Limitations: Training usually took place in schools after the lessons were finished. This made women's participation difficult owing to their time constraints. Nevertheless, in general, interactions with women's groups in the field conveyed the sense that they were highly satisfied with the skills training and improved - or rather, "newly introduced" - access to microcredit.

Country	Syrian Arab Republic	CASE STUDY
Project name	Badia Rangelands Development Project (BRDP)	
Implementation period	1998-2013	
Project type	Agricultural development	
Main documents	PCRVR	

Context: In 2011, the Syrian Arab Republic ranked 124 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.5896 (ranking 129 in economic participation, 110 in political empowerment, 61 in health and survival and 109 in educational attainment). Herding communities were conservative and religious with low levels of education and high rates of illiteracy, in a degraded rangeland context. Women living in herding households played a major role in managing domestic affairs (including water and firewood collection), as well as undertaking various livestock-related tasks, including herding, milking and cleaning the animals' shed or pen. Most women took part in sheep-rearing activities while mainly the older women carried out domestic duties only. Of those that performed domestic and productive work, almost half work 10 hours or more a day and the rest between 5 and 10 hours a day, presumably excluding household chores. Women's contribution to economic activity was mainly for subsistence purposes and tended to

be seasonal, with peaks occurring during winter and spring, during the milking and hand-feeding seasons – activities typically undertaken by women. Milk processing was also considered to be the work of women, which added to women's workload during milking seasons. In general there were few opportunities for women to find income-generating opportunities (whether through self-employment or through employment by others).

Strategy: The project did not have a gender strategy, nor gender specific objectives or targets. However the component on "Community development" comprised activities for "Women's development" – allocated 3.6 per cent of project costs. In practice, project interventions targeting women spread across two out of the four project components. Although the project targeted women, it does not appear to have systematically mainstreamed gender considerations throughout its operations and activities.

Activity/ies: Livelihoods training (knitting and textile, handicrafts, food conservation and processing, health and hygiene education) and seasonal labour employment (planting and seed collection). Other activities that directly or indirectly targeted women comprised literacy courses, social infrastructure (roads, water supplies, desalination plants), membership of women in grazing committees and cooperatives, and small credit to women.

Outputs: The livelihood training courses for women have contributed to improved family care and household savings (e.g. from bottling foods and making preserves, to making clothes for the family and saving on visits to the doctor). Only a very small proportion of women set up small income generating enterprises. The vast majority neither had the means, nor the intention to start commercial activities after the training.

Seasonal labour employment through planting and seed collection led to 27,000 households, mainly unmarried women or those with older children, benefiting from employment opportunities. These were particularly useful for women from non-herder households and proved to be one of the only employment opportunities available to women.

Water resources were made available throughout the project area for livestock and drinking water was provided to "selected beneficiaries".

Impact: Given the challenging context, the project made notable improvements to gender equality and women's empowerment. Seasonal employment through planting and seed collection provided an important source of income for women and poor herdsman. The work also contributed to the rehabilitation of the rangeland. Livelihood training courses, employment opportunities and improved literacy reportedly helped women move towards increased social awareness and self-confidence. Some women realized that they could earn money and take responsibilities alongside their husbands in the household. Overall, it is inferred that higher incomes, greater employment opportunities, improved livestock development (such as higher milk production; healthier animals; higher prolificacy rates) and increased involvement of women in certain food making activities have positively affected food security.

Sustainability: Seasonal labour employment in rangelands had the potential to continue since the grazing committees and cooperatives were likely to remain functional after project completion.

The income-generating activities of a minority of women would depend on their ability to access local markets yet there are limited local markets to sell their wares.

Success factors: The confluence of literacy, livelihood training and seasonal employment for women challenged some established gender stereotypes and brought about positive change to reduce poverty.

Agents of change: The project steering committee included the General Union of Women, but its role or contribution is not further discussed.

Limitations: From the outset, many women in herding households communicated that they were not eager to add to their current work burdens by doing more traditional work or starting an income-earning activity, especially if this would involve some form of credit. Women prefer to sell surplus milk to travelling cheese-makers rather than process it themselves. Prices for wool were low and there was little incentive for women to process wool and make blankets, pillows, mattresses or cloth to sell. Very few still practiced wool handicrafts, as they once did traditionally, and if they did, it was generally only for home use.

In the Sweida and Dara'a provinces, closer to Damascus, women from the project had been trained to produce high quality embroidered products for sale in the city. However they were at the mercy of middlemen who took most of the profits for themselves and help was needed with marketing.

Drinking-water supplies were only available to "selected beneficiaries" rather than for all.

A potential issue could be strained gender relations when women become sedentary and men remain herders. Women are cut off from herd milk, which can have an impact on household nutrition and food, but as this activity was in particular useful for women from non-herder households this may not be an issue.



Country	Uganda	CASE STUDY
Project name	Area-based Agricultural Modernization Programme (AAMP)	
Implementation period	1999-2010	
Project type	Rural development	
Main documents	PPA	

Context: In 2011, Uganda ranked 29 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.722 (ranking 42 in economic participation, 25 in political empowerment, 1 in health and survival and 107 in educational attainment). The country's poorest people include hundreds of thousands of smallholder farmers living in remote areas scattered throughout the country. Remoteness makes people poor in as much as it prevents them from benefiting from Uganda's steady economic growth and dynamic modernization. Like most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Uganda is faced with disparities in the gender division of labour within the agriculture sector. Rural Uganda is highly patriarchal. Gender issues, including negative attitudes, mindsets, cultural practices and perceptions are part of the key binding constraints on economic and social development. Men support customary practices that limit women's access to land and other productive resources.

Strategy: Unclear from the reports.

Activity/ies: Interventions that were gender-related included: rural financial services support, including capacity-building for selected savings and credit cooperatives (SACCOs); the market stall rehabilitation scheme; the goat production scheme; the improved rural infrastructure scheme; and engaging men in gender sensitization.

The district and sub-county commercial officials helped the SACCOs prepare and monitor business plans, annual reports, accounts and annual audits. The Uganda Cooperative Savings and Credit Union, financed by the IFAD-supported Rural Financial Services Programme supervised and guided the SACCOs under AAMP through monthly visits.

Output: By programme completion, 35 SACCOs (compared to a target of 32) had received support in the form of training and equipment (a safe,

stationary and other small items) to enhance their operational capacity. A total of 29,000 people benefited from this support.

The SACCO support was targeted because it was a part of the national microfinance policy framework and Tier 4 regulation. Women comprised 40 per cent (as compared to the target of 50 per cent) of the SACCO members. The groups first received on-farm trials and demonstrations, which made it possible for them to qualify for rural financial support. The demonstrations were important learning stations for farmers to acquire knowledge and skills needed to adopt the new technologies. It is reported that the demonstrations were largely responsible for the high adoption rate of various techniques, namely upland rice in Kabarole, Kanungu and Rukungiri Districts, improved banana management in Ntungamo District, Irish potato growing in Kabale, Kisoro and Mbarara Districts, pineapple growing in Sembabule and Kyenjojo Districts, as well as the adoption of improved goat husbandry in all programme districts. The establishment of SACCOs and the availability of credit helped facilitate farmers' engagement in productive agricultural enterprises. Farmers' groups and associations were now linked to financial

services, especially with regard to potato-, rice- and banana-growing, and in milk-producing areas.

Impact: AAMP-supported activities including the improved rural financial services through the SACCOs and the rehabilitation of improved roads contributed to improving women's well-being and easing their workloads. More than 17,000 members of the SACCOs had saved a total of UGX 1.42 billion (about US\$700,000) by mid-2008. A significant proportion of loans from SACCOs was used for school fees, allowing more children to enter and stay in school. The impact study also reported better capacity of SACCO members to pay for medical care. Access to financial services had enabled them to manage money and have greater control over resources and access to knowledge. This helped to challenge traditional gender roles and gave women a greater voice in family matters, as well as improved self-esteem and self-confidence. The satisfactory degree to which women were empowered and played more of a decision-making role is demonstrated by the fact that they were represented in leadership positions in all sub-projects, maintenance committees and the SACCOs. The impact assessment noted that a number of AAMP-supported groups were dominated by women,

some of whom were executive members of their respective group committees.

Better rural roads helped reduce the time women spent travelling to carry out domestic chores (e.g. collecting water and firewood, trips to the grinding mill to produce flour for domestic consumption and to local markets, etc.). Improved access to services, such as inputs markets and financial services allowed women to become more involved in economic activities and the impact on their empowerment was significant.

Sensitizing men to gender issues in the household and the community enabled a renegotiation of underlying patriarchal norms. The deliberate engagement and dialogue with men helped to expand spaces for women's participation and partnership.

Sustainability: There was concern about the viability of the SACCOs supported. The average repayment rate of loans was 75 per cent. Several SACCOs therefore had even lower repayment rates and were thus early candidates for failure.¹⁰

Another challenge was that the SACCOs still lacked sufficient funds to pay for the needed ongoing technical assistance. However, by project completion most SACCOs had been taken up by the IFAD-financed Rural Financial Services Programme to enable them to continue providing services to farmers.

Success factors: The fact that the implementers were facilitators while the community members were tasked with running the committees fostered a strong sense of ownership and fostered sustainability.

The gender sensitization of male heads of households and traditional leaders was largely instrumental in the slight shift in gender roles at the household and community level, respectively. Creating awareness among them helps build a critical mass of male change agents. When men preach gender justice in rural Africa it is usually compelling and creates an enabling environment for gender-related transformative change. The multicomponent approach supported the drive for gender equality. It is much easier for communities

¹⁰ The dangers arising from using SACCOs as conduits of outside funds to farmers. The politicization of microfinance, especially after the 2006 presidential elections, made the overall political environment under which SACCOs operated very challenging.

to support the drive for social change when they are also benefiting from improved access and opportunities in the local economy.

Agents of change: The local government authorities were key because their truly “bottom-up” approach to development created a sense of ownership between community members for new activities. Men heads of households and community leaders were vital in the promotion of improved gender equality.

Limitations: Even though the project exceeded targets on the number of SACCOs created, the number of SACCOs beneficiaries overall (around 29,000 households or less than 10 per cent of families) was relatively low in the programme area. This may be in part because of delays in starting support for SACCOs due to waiting for policy guidance from the central government concerning the Rural Financial Services Strategy (approved in August 2006), specifically regarding the microfinance policy framework.

Country	Uganda	CASE STUDY
Project name	Vegetable Oil Development Project (VODP)	
Implementation period	1997-2013	
Project type	Rural development	
Main documents	Project completion report and PCRV	

Context: In 2011, Uganda ranked 29 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.722 (ranking 42 in economic participation, 25 in political empowerment, 1 in health and survival and 107 in educational attainment). Civil strife caused by the Lord's Resistance Army had left many jobless and impoverished veterans. There were also many widows left as heads of households as a result of AIDS.

Strategy: Gender was mainstreamed in project objectives, components and targets. VODP aimed to increase domestic vegetable oil production, address rural poverty and improve the health of the population. It addressed rural poverty through the involvement of smallholder farmers in oil crop production and cottage processing; and aimed to contribute to improved health and food security through increased vegetable oil intake and the provision of alternative crops for income-generation.

Activity/ies: Facilitate improved production, processing and market access for rural farmers involved in growing traditional oilseeds such as sim sim, sunflower, ground nuts and soya bean. This included support for adaptive research in improved seed varieties, the provision of extension services and the creation and support of farmers' groups by offering institutional capacity-building support. This included the provision of appropriate technologies to optimize oil extraction from crops for farmers, in particular for women. Other components focused on the production, processing and marketing of palm oil and essential oils.

Outputs: A total of 212,229 smallholders were directly reached by the project, of which 83,007 (39 per cent) were women: (i) 444 (34 per cent) in the palm oil component; (ii) 82,263 (39 per cent) in the traditional oil seeds component and (iii) 300 (30 per cent) in the essential oil component. In the traditional

oil seeds component, the local government staff strengthened the already existing farmers' groups and formed new ones (with at least 20 members). Women and youth were particularly encouraged to form groups. The project trained group members in group dynamics to ensure that farmers appreciated the need to maintain a strong group. Farmers were informed of the benefits of working in groups including learning from each other, ease of mobilization for provision of extension services and bulking among others. The project also trained farmer groups in marketing, saving and credit activities to earn higher income from their produce and to manage their resources better.

Strategy: In total 5,998 farmer groups (versus planned 8770) were formed, 8,453 on-farm demonstrations (versus planned 11,963) were held, 8,755 farmer training sessions (versus planned 12,236) were conducted and 56,289 farm visits (versus planned 71,340) were undertaken. This mobilization attracted more farmers to grow traditional oil crops especially sunflower where 68,071 hectares out of the targeted 85,236 (80 per cent) were planted.

The provision of ram presses enhanced domestic vegetable oil consumption in addition to enabling

farmers to utilize sunflower cakes for other projects such as poultry and piggery. Some of the oil was sold for income. However many women may have missed out on this opportunity owing to difficulty operating the machinery.

Impact: Farmers' skills and knowledge in oil crop production and management improved (no differentiation between men and women found). Increased incomes were reported by 86 per cent of households in the traditional oil seeds sub component. Although income data is not disaggregated by gender it is reported that women equally participated and benefited from the project. The project led to a change in production from subsistence to commercial farming. Projects like piggery and poultry were set up in the traditional oil seeds sub-component area because of sunflower production which had animal feed cake as a by-product. Bee keeping was also carried out by farmers involved in sunflower production.

Farmer groups established in traditional oil seeds and essential oil seeds sub-components raised the rural poor's voice and respect in society to the extent that some model farmers and group leaders were elected local council leaders. Women and youth were equally involved as group leaders and

in several farmers' groups women are reported to have excelled.

Sustainability: Many beneficiary farmers moved from subsistence to more business-oriented ventures within the oil value chains (gender-disaggregated impact data not available). Nonetheless, much of their activities still required support and external funding.

Success factors: The mobilization of women to form/join farmers' groups by the local government authorities.

Agents of change: The project worked closely with the local leaders at all levels. These included opinion leaders, political leaders, religious leaders and elders in the communities. Female leaders were specifically targeted as these were found to appeal more to women, youth and the elderly. These leaders participated in project activities, mobilized the farmers and worked with the project to counter negative publicity. The strategy generated and enhanced political support, ownership and sustainability from the national, district and grass-root levels.

Limitations: Sunflower faced some resistance initially, as some farmers had erroneously associated it with soil infertility while others related it to poor market prices. With sensitization, training, demonstrations and assured markets from millers, farmers' attitudes changed and sunflower became one of the most produced commodities in the project area. The manual ram press technology to process sunflower seeds presented a challenge because it required too much strength for women and the elderly to operate. The targets of planned activities in some cases were not fully met due to drought, floods and the effects of the Lord's Resistance Army war that affected project activities.



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Country	Viet Nam	CASE STUDY
Project name	Rural Income Diversification Project in Tuyen Quang Province (RIDP)	
Implementation period	2001-2011	
Project type	Rural development	
Main documents	PPA	

Context: In 2011, Viet Nam ranked 79 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.6732 (ranking 40 in economic participation, 76 in political empowerment, 130 in health and survival and 104 in educational attainment). Viet Nam is advanced in protecting women’s rights legally, but the practical application of this is weak in rural areas where social norms regarding women’s roles and rights are more traditional. Forest land is the major natural resource in the province, but it was controlled and protected by the Government so farmers were unable to take advantage of forest resources to raise their standards of living and were limited to subsistence-level farming on small marginal farms.

Strategy: The project aimed to improve the socio-economic status of 49,000 poor households living in upland areas, especially ethnic minorities and women, by increasing their capacity for, and role in, decision-making, enhancing food security,

promoting the diversification of rural income opportunities, and encouraging the sustainable use of natural resources. Although RIDP became effective a year before the Gender Plan of Action was in force, the gender strategy to mainstream gender through all component activities (and project management) meant that all three Gender Plan of Action objectives were addressed on assets and income, decision-making and well-being.

Gender-related objectives included:

- Increasing women’s access to and ownership and control of productive resources, mainly through promoting the joint titling of husband and wife on forest land use certificates (FLUCs);
- Increasing women’s access to financial services through development of saving-credit groups, pro-poor microfinance institutions and services;
- Empowering women to increase their community management capacities;
- Empowering women to negotiate more

favourable terms in the gender distribution of labour;

- Enhancing women's visibility as economic agents, thereby improving their position in the community and household;
- Combating domestic violence through social mobilization; and
- Gender awareness training for men.

Activity/ies: Joint FLUCs were set up for two main reasons: to correct gender-based discrimination on access to and control of forest resources; and to create a mechanism to improve the sustainable use of forest resources by households.

Outputs: In supporting of the issuance of FLUCs, the project helped in the preparation of maps, review and collection of data obtained from remote sensing imagery in the field, and registration of cadastral documents in 66 communes. Over the project period, 40,000 FLUCs (against a target of 49,000) covering 50,300 hectares were awarded to 26,000 households. Establishing FLUCs addressed weakly protected rights for women and helped formally recognize their ownership of forest land and resources.

Impacts: The FLUCs are reported to have led to the diversification of target households' income sources as farmers started or increased the productive use of forest resources, for example by farming, growing non-timber forest products and producing bamboo chopsticks and handicrafts. The project intervention raised villagers' awareness of the importance of conserving natural resources and improved the sustainable use of forest resources, for example by investing in tree plantations. There was also less illegal logging in the special-use and protection of forests, as the allocated forest areas provided timber, fuelwood and non-timber forest products to meet household needs. The initial impact assessment showed that the forest coverage rate of the province increased from 62 per cent to 69 per cent between 2004 and 2007, although this achievement should be partly attributed to the Government's policies and programmes for reclassifying the use of forest lands.

Sustainability: The PPA states that forest land economic activities supported by the project are very likely to be maintained and further improved by the village groups and households due to the increased market access and growing local market

demands. Favourable market prices of timber and pulp wood are also important variables. Forest land management should be ensured as land use is protected by certificates for long-term use, although farmers may need additional technical support. Analysis of the gendered differences of the activity over time was not available.

Success factors: The Government's commitment to privatization. The 2002 COSOP made a concerted effort to develop a gender strategy to address the strategic and practical needs of rural women, thereby increasing the impact of project interventions on poverty and gender inequalities. The confluence of multiple and complementary project activities to promote gender equality and women's empowerment appears to have been an important factor in challenging local gender roles and responsibilities (for example, compared to before the project women spend less time on rice production and more on rice selling, husbands have started to support their wives with domestic work at home, and women participate more in social activities).

Agents of change: Not clear.

Limitations: The number of women with FLUC titles is not clear, nor is it clear the degree of control women had of the forest land and its products (in relation to the men in their family). The number of FLUCs issued was less than planned owing to the time required to respond to the Government's reclassification of forest lands, which called for an assessment of the value of forest trees on each parcel of land. The PPA does not explore power relations between men and women in a household, where a woman may be the de-facto co-owner of the forest resource, but her access to and control of the resource is actually restricted by a male relative.

Country	Yemen	CASE STUDY
Project name	1. Al Mahara Rural Development Project (AMRDP) 2. Dhamar Participatory Rural Development Project (DPRDP)	
Implementation period	1. 1999-2012 2. 2002-2013	
Project type	Agricultural development and rural development (resp.)	
Main documents	PCRV and CPE	

Project and country: Al Mahara Rural Development Project (AMRDP) and Dhamar Participatory Rural Development Project (DPRDP) Yemen.

Project types: Agricultural development and rural development (respectively).

Context: In 2011, Yemen ranked last out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.4873 (ranking 135 in economic participation, 131 in political empowerment, 83 in health and survival and 134 in educational attainment). Women are among the poorest in Yemen and female headed households are poorer than male headed households, especially in rural areas. Women have limited access and control of productive assets, restricted contribution to civic and social activities and high levels of illiteracy. Less than 1 per cent of agricultural landholders

in Yemen are women. However, women have a major role in agriculture, often bearing the main responsibility for field crops, irrigated fodder, and horticulture. Women are also the main handlers of livestock within the home compound, and in the highlands they are mainly responsible for care of cattle. Women officially constitute 39 per cent of household labour on farms and 10 per cent of wage labour, but their share of both may be higher.

Migration of the young and male household members away from rural areas means the women left behind must bear greater responsibility for managing the farm and caring for the family, on top of their existing tasks. While remittances sent home can enable some women to improve household living conditions and purchase food and non-food items, there has also been a shift from producing their own food to purchasing food. Women are also subject to pressure from

young men and local community members from associations, or individuals with material or religious influence to restrict women's economic activities and promote the woman's place at home.

Strategy: Gender issues have been mainstreamed through much of the projects' components that aimed to strengthen the capacity of men and women farmers and fishermen and their communities, particularly disadvantaged groups, to determine access to and use of appropriate resources, technology and financial services for domestic work, agriculture, fisheries and livestock development. Gender balance was sought among project and field staff for several reasons: the need to respect cultural sensitivities in isolated rural communities; to communicate effectively with poor rural women; and to ensure their effective participation in project activities.

Activity/ies: The AMRDP initiated, and the DPRDP developed, women-only and men-only CDCs to identify priority needs and address them accordingly through small-scale initiatives. Women-only CDCs aimed to raise awareness about and address women's needs by creating a safe space for them to discuss and identify their needs. The initiatives envisaged included road

construction, village water supply schemes, soil and water conservation works, minor irrigation and other investments that arose from popular demand.

Outputs: In AMRDP, 304 women and 421 men were trained in community development and 38 women-only (and 39 men-only) CDCs were created in 42 communities. The women-only CDCs were later converted and registered as Women's Development Associations, under the Civil Society Association Law. In DPRDP, 624 women and 1,677 men were trained in community development and 136 CDCs were created (but it was not reported in the PCRV how many of them were women only). The CDCs enabled men and women to identify and prioritize their needs and effectively assess their development issues. It also allowed communities to actively contribute to the preparation and implementation of initiatives. Village development plans were formulated from discussions held in CDCs and were incorporated into local government planning and budgeting processes. Completed investments identified in these plans have been handed over to relevant governorate agencies for operation and maintenance or are being managed and operated by local committees on the basis of full cost recovery.

Impact: The women-only CDCs encouraged the strong and effective involvement of women in community affairs (rather than only traditional male-dominated leadership) and they are reported to have given women confidence in their ability to initiate and manage development initiatives. The CDCs are used as lobbying platforms for communities to secure services from the government or non-governmental organizations (it is not known if this applies to both women and men CDCs). The creation, strengthening and registration of representative community organizations is a hallmark of IFAD operations in the country.

Sustainability: The CDCs were a relatively new method in rural Yemen to encourage local communities to establish and maintain sustainable projects to meet their own (and differential) needs. Yet, the conversion of the CDCs into associations (notably in AMRDP and DPRDP) has produced a qualitative leap in the lives of the members. Aided by the project, these associations have been registered with the offices of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, giving them some access to support from the Ministry. It also allows them - as entities legally recognized by the state - to contact others, specifically donors.

Even though still limited overall, the registration of CDCs by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour so far is considered a major achievement because it enables the associations to operate within the law and become financially sustainable.

Success factors: A supportive government service and policy; cultural sensitivity when dealing with traditional community leaders; a great deal of time and the earmarking of resources needed to overcome the many problems encountered; field teams of men and women to ensure gender issues were mainstreamed in the conservative male-run society of Yemen.

Agents of change: The CDCs can be said to be the principal change agents promoting gender equality in this project.

Limitations: Social and economic instability and conflicting ideologies in the country.

Country	Yemen	CASE STUDY
Project name	Dhamar Participatory Rural Development Project (DPRDP)	
Implementation period	2002-2013	
Project type	Rural development	
Main documents	PCRV	

Context: In 2011, Yemen ranked last out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.4873 (ranking 135 in economic participation, 131 in political empowerment, 83 in health and survival and 134 in educational attainment). Women are among the poorest in Yemen and female headed households are poorer than male-headed households, especially in rural areas. Women have limited access and control of productive assets, restricted contribution to civic and social activities and high levels of illiteracy. Less than 1 per cent of agricultural landholders in Yemen are women. However, women have a major role in agriculture, often bearing the main responsibility for field crops, irrigated fodder, and horticulture. Women are also the main handlers of livestock within the home compound. In the highlands, women are mainly responsible for the care of cattle. Women officially constitute 39 per cent of household labour on farms and 10 per cent of wage labour, but their share of both may be higher.

Migration of the young and male household members away from rural areas means the women left behind must bear greater responsibility for managing the farm and caring for the family, in addition to their existing tasks. While remittances sent home can enable some women to improve household living conditions and purchase food and non-food items, there has also been a shift from producing their own food to purchasing food. Women are also subject to local pressure on young men and local community members from associations or individuals with material or religious influence to restrict women's economic activities and promote the woman's place at home. Animal extension services to improve livestock husbandry were unavailable before the project.

Strategy: Gender issues have been mainstreamed through much of the projects' components that aimed to empower communities to enable them to participate and benefit from project execution, remove social and physical constraints

to productivity and empower farming households to achieve food security and increase income from market sales. A gender balance was sought among project and field staff for several reasons: the need to respect cultural sensitivities in isolated rural communities; to communicate effectively with poor rural women; and to ensure their effective participation in project activities. Although the project was approved after the Gender Plan of Action, it addressed the three main objectives.

Activity/ies: Identification and training of men and women to become village animal health extension workers. They were trained to provide routine on-farm crop and livestock services and demonstrations based on farmer demand. The project provided incentives to the best-performing village animal health extension workers. These took the form of grants, equipment or tools (veterinary kits) to enable them to commercialize their work in the future and continue providing extension services.

Other interventions that targeted gender issues were the construction of social infrastructure (schools, water supplies and healthcare centres) and feeder roads, literacy training, participatory

and women-only community development committees and saving and credit groups.

Outputs: A total of 244 men and 94 women extension agents were identified in the communities and trained and of these agents 21 men and 74 women received veterinary kits. The activity worked better for women than men (35 per cent of target) because animal rearing was mainly a women's responsibility.

Impact: Overall, the project had a significant positive impact on women in its attempt to reduce gender inequalities. Reports on the impact of village animal health extension workers were not found. Interviews with beneficiaries suggested that the project was successful in overcoming many social constraints of vulnerable groups and women. In particular, women received training to perform various roles at the community level, increasing their visibility and voice to influence decision-making.

A water harvesting project in Utmah governorate provided clean, filtered water at a rate of 10 litres per person per day for a three-month period. This reduced the time spent fetching water by two hours per day for women and girls over this time period.

Sustainability: All selected extension workers were trained in their relevant fields and started to deliver their extension advice/messages on a fee-for-service-basis, in an attempt to commercialize the extension services in the target communities. The model was successful in some communities, but more time was needed for it to gain widespread community acceptance and to be replicated on a wider scale. In some communities, incentivizing the village animal health extension workers through veterinary kits was not effective and called into question the sustainability of the extension services.

Success factors: Positive discrimination towards women in activities and operations in a context of extreme gender inequality. An equal number of men and women field staff promoted the inclusion of women in project activities and planning processes.

Agents of change: Female farmers trained to be agricultural extension agents to overcome the problem of reaching out to women and breaking down communication barriers.

Limitations: There was limited success involving men in village animal health extension workers.

A more effective use of resources would have been to focus the identification and training on women, rather than men, given that women are responsible for livestock around the home. Men did not benefit as planned from the literacy training. Possible reasons for this included that men saw little financial gain so did not invest their time in literacy classes, the project mainly targeted women and may not have targeted men effectively, the service provider who conducted the training may not have effectively reached out to men. Civil unrest in 2011 slowed down disbursements and made parts of the project area inaccessible. The water from the open water harvesting tanks was highly vulnerable to contamination and therefore unsafe for consumption. The availability of clean drinking water in Utmah governorate still saw a large number of girls collecting water rather than attending school. When enquiring about the reason for their absence from school, an elderly woman responded, "Why education? Who will bring the water? Who will take care of the sheep?". This highlights the remaining practical, cultural and inter-generational barriers to gender equality in rural Yemen.

Country	Zambia	CASE STUDY
Project name	Smallholder Enterprise and Marketing Programme	
Implementation period	1999-2010	
Project type	Agricultural development	
Main documents	CPE	

Context: In 2011, Zambia ranked 106 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.63 (ranking 87 in economic participation, 84 in political empowerment, 97 in health and survival and 120 in educational attainment). Despite comprehensive gender mainstreaming in national plans and policies for economic development in general, gender inequality remains deeply entrenched in Zambia. Female participation in the labour market is 74 per cent compared to 86 per cent for men. Women still have difficulty owning and controlling land. Despite formalized equal rights, they are confronted with a number of inequalities. For women in rural areas, this includes access to education, credit and suitable technologies. Women have less access to governmental extension services and training held by private companies - they are often unable to attend farmer education and training days - due to too much work at home or because their level of education precludes them from attending the courses. Rural women have a

heavier workload than men taking on productive and domestic work, although evidence suggests that men and women are increasingly working together on some productive activities.

Strategy: Gender was mainstreamed through the projects components: (i) agribusiness development; (ii) market access improvement; and iii) smallholder enterprise development.

Activity/ies: Infrastructure development to improve women's access to markets.

Outputs: Overnight accommodation (containers) at the Lusaka Small Livestock Association market with support from the Cross Border Trading Association (CBTA) at Kasumbalesa at the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At the time of the CPE mission, membership of the CBTA comprised 864 people, of whom over 500 were women. The CBTA gradually increased its range of services and aimed to find additional financing for

more containers to provide members with a safe storage facility. The containers were used against a small fee.

Impact: The accommodation provided by the CBTA improved women's access to the important Lusaka Small Livestock Association market by providing them with a safe place to sleep. The CBTA also assists women when they are in trouble (e.g. theft or rape). There are also examples of the association helping members who had been robbed and lost their papers and money in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and were unable to return to Zambia.

Sustainability: Limited information available

Success factors: A safe place for traders, in particular women, to sleep. In addition, the association advocated simplified trade regimes, cheap trade visas and other private sector deals.

Agents of change: The association is run by volunteers.

Limitations: Limited information available.

**Independent Office
of Evaluation**



Investing in rural people

Independent Office of Evaluation
International Fund for Agricultural Development
Via Paolo di Dono, 44 - 00142 Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 54591 - Fax: +39 06 5043463
E-mail: evaluation@ifad.org
www.ifad.org/evaluation



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