

Gender Equality: Beyond business as usual

A focus area within the CGIAR
Research Program on Water, Land
and Ecosystems

THE CHALLENGE

The world needs to feed 9 billion people by 2050 using roughly the same amount of land as today. Production on those lands will need to increase by as much as 40 percent while maintaining fragile ecosystems.

THE OBJECTIVE

Women farmers are poised to help the world increase crop production, ensure food security and lift people out of poverty especially in rural communities in developing countries. Agricultural output in developing countries could increase by 2.5 to 4 percent if women farmers attained equal access to resources, according to a 2011 report by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization. That would translate into a reduction in the number of undernourished people by as much as 17 percent. CGIAR's research program on Water, Land and Ecosystems, led by the International Water Management Institute, is conducting pioneering research to respond to the needs of women and men farmers.

THE OBSTACLE

Data shows that women farmers have similar production yields to men when provided equitable access to resources. Currently, however, there is a wide gender gap: Studies show that male farmers generate 20 to 30



WLE's gender goals include:

- Give women better access to water, land and ecosystems.
- Enable women to have greater decision-making power.
- Help women re-invest and revitalize land, water and ecosystems.

percent higher crop yields than women farmers. That's primarily because women farmers don't have equal access to land, water and agricultural inputs such as credit, irrigation technologies and technical information.

Women often are relegated to farming degraded land and if they own land, their plots are smaller than those controlled by men. Cultural and social norms, rules, policies and laws at all levels -- household, community, private sector and public sector -- limit access.



TO ACHIEVE ITS GOALS, WLE WILL

- Examine the social relations, structures, organizing principles within households, communities, government and the private sector that limit equal access to resources.
- Engage with men and women to understand their different needs, priorities and constraints. What are the gender inequality gaps? What are the implications for irrigation, land management and ecosystem services?
- Promote good science that answers gender-relevant questions, and provide the appropriate data and information to help influence and develop a more inclusive environment.
- Incorporate gender into each research project and geographical area, and conduct gender “audits” within WLE’s themes and working group areas to ensure gender is being appropriately considered.
- Monitor and evaluate projects to determine which approaches can be scaled, and to mitigate potential negative impacts or unintended consequences.
- Propose specific ways donors and governments can invest in women farmers so they have equal access to financing markets, equipment and other agricultural inputs.

EXAMPLES OF GENDER-SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Do gender equitable property laws exist in WLE regions? Do social and cultural norms allow for both men and women to own land? Is it possible for them to access information about these laws or legal support services?
- Do processes exist for men and women to engage in joint decision making and collaboration, such as in the creation of water associations, land stewardship committees, and irrigation revitalization efforts?
- Does gender equity promote sustainable agriculture and ecosystem preservation?
- In what ways do women and men differ in their stewardship of natural resources?
- What broader gender-related issues need to be identified, such as population pressure and climate change, to ensure food security and safeguard the planet?

Learn More

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