



INTERNATIONAL
FOOD POLICY
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INSTITUTE

IFPRI

IFPRI STRATEGY

GENDER RESEARCH

Recognizing the importance of gender issues in development, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has a long history of gender research relevant to our mission of providing policy solutions that sustainably reduce poverty and end hunger and malnutrition. This strategy summarizes IFPRI's approach to gender research.

Throughout the developing world, women, working together with men, play the dual roles of agricultural producers and household caregivers and are the key to securing household food security and nutrition. At the same time, the division of rights, resources, and responsibilities between men and women often results in higher vulnerability of women and girls to undernutrition, micronutrient malnutrition, poor health, and a general lack of time to accomplish their daily tasks.

As the global community mobilizes in support of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality and women's rights, at least 11 of the 17 SDGs include indicators related to gender dynamics—the social relations between men and women. SDG2, ending world hunger, explicitly mentions addressing the constraints for women who are small-scale food producers and the nutritional needs of women and adolescent girls. To monitor progress toward these goals, significant global commitments have been made to close the gender data gap. Closing this data gap means paying close attention to gender dynamics in all of IFPRI's strategic research areas.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF IFPRI GENDER RESEARCH

Gender research at IFPRI:

- › Focuses on men and women, not just women, to understand differences and relationships. IFPRI gender research also examines the interactions between gender and other characteristics, such as age, class, and caste, that may affect well-being.
- › Compares female-headed versus male-headed households and seeks to look at individuals within the household.
- › Considers associations between gender and age that are important in understanding the employment of young women and men, changes in roles and status during the lifecycle, and transitions to adulthood for adolescent girls and boys.
- › Recognizes the instrumental role that women play in their families and communities and examines concrete ways to advance women's empowerment and equality for their own sake.
- › Takes a cross-cutting approach—from land to water, households to communities to value chains, nutrition to education, and across the lifecycle—and is addressed in all of IFPRI's strategic research areas.
- › Uses both quantitative and qualitative methods and draws on the strengths of quantitative and qualitative disciplinary approaches.
- › Is evidence-based, relying on rigorous research and using appropriate methods and approaches.
- › Advances methodological innovations in various fields, including measuring women's empowerment in agriculture, through active exchange with practitioners and other researchers.
- › Spotlights data gaps and provides guidance for filling those gaps.
- › Considers ethical implications of any research undertaking.

- › Engages in current policy debates, striving to bring evidence to bear on questions relevant to the worlds of policy and practice.

DIVERSITY OF TOPICS AND METHODS

IFPRI's six strategic research areas will weave gender into all their research questions. Gender issues will also be accounted for in all phases of research, from priority setting to implementation of research to monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessment.

IFPRI researchers use a range of methods to generate evidence on how gender relates to food and nutrition security to inform more inclusive economic development and empowerment. Across its research, IFPRI examines the gendered impacts of institutions, policies, programs, and projects, as well as the influence of gender on a range of development outcomes, including nutrition, health, agricultural productivity, natural resource management, market development, land and resource governance, and economic development and poverty reduction more broadly. In addition, IFPRI particularly focuses on the drivers and implications of women's empowerment in agriculture.

Specific examples of research, with their relationship to IFPRI strategic themes (in parentheses), include:

Measuring women's empowerment in agriculture

- › [Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index](#)
- › [Women's Empowerment in Agriculture: What Role for Food Security in Bangladesh?](#)

Understanding decision making, control over assets, and resource allocation within the household

- › [Who Decides to Grow Orange Sweet Potatoes? Bargaining Power and Adoption of Biofortified Crops in Uganda](#)
- › [The Impact of Bolsa Família on Women's Decision-Making Power](#)

Gendered impacts of agricultural development projects (ensuring sustainable food production; promoting healthy food systems)

- › [Can Integrated Agriculture-Nutrition Programmes Change Gender Norms on Land and Asset Ownership? Evidence from Burkina Faso](#)

- › [Gender, Assets, and Agricultural Development Programs: A Conceptual Framework](#)
- › [Gender, Assets, and Agricultural Development: Lessons from Eight Projects](#)

Studying approaches to strengthen women's control over land and other assets (ensuring sustainable food production; strengthening institutions and governance)

- › [Women's Land Rights as a Pathway to Poverty Reduction](#)
- › [Gender Inequalities in Ownership and Control of Land in Africa: Myths versus Reality](#)

Impact of women's empowerment on child and maternal nutrition and health (promoting healthy food systems)

- › [Women's Empowerment Mitigates the Negative Effects of Low Production Diversity on Maternal and Child Nutrition in Nepal](#)
- › [What Dimensions of Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Matter for Nutrition in Ghana?](#)

Closing gender gaps in agricultural productivity (ensuring sustainable food production)

- › [Synopsis of Gender in Agriculture: Closing the Knowledge Gap](#)
- › [Policy Experiment in Mozambique Highlights Importance of Gender in Dissemination of Sustainable Land Management Techniques](#)
- › [The Diffusion of Agricultural Technologies within Social Networks: Evidence from Composting in Mali](#)

Gendered constraints to participation in value chains (improving markets and trade)

- › [Can Dairy Value Chain Projects Change Gender Norms in Rural Bangladesh? Impacts on Assets, Gender Norms, and Time Use](#)
- › [Gender Roles and Food Safety in 20 Informal Livestock and Fish Value Chains](#)
- › [Intertemporal Choice and Income Regularity](#)

Gendered aspects of adaptation to climate change (ensuring sustainable food production; building resilience)

- › [Do Shocks Affect Men's and Women's Assets Differently?](#)

- › [Addressing Gender in Agricultural Research for Development in the Face of a Changing Climate: Where Are We and Where Should We Be Going?](#)
- › [Research Guide for Gender-Disaggregated Analysis of Climate Change Impacts and Adaptions](#)

Governance of rural services and legal institutions (strengthening institutions and governance)

- › [Policy Reform toward Gender Equality in Ethiopia: Little by Little the Egg Begins to Walk](#)
- › [Filling the Legal Void? Experimental Evidence from a Community-Based Legal Aid Program for Gender-Equal Land Rights in Tanzania](#)

Interaction between social protection and violence against women (building resilience)

- › [Cash Transfers and Domestic Violence](#)
- › [Undercounting, Overcounting and the Longevity of Flawed Estimates: Statistics on Sexual Violence in Conflict](#)

MODALITIES FOR INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

IFPRI's [Gender Task Force \(GenTF\)](#) was created in 2004 to systematically strengthen gender research within the Institute. Its mandate as an interdivisional mechanism is to:

- › Provide support to researchers interested in incorporating gender into their work;
- › Identify new areas for strategic research on gender;
- › Disseminate information about IFPRI's work on gender to external audiences; and
- › Link with relevant gender policy research in CGIAR.

The GenTF currently includes senior representatives from each research division, regional offices, the communications division, and IFPRI-led CGIAR cross-cutting research programs. The GenTF leadership also oversees the IFPRI gender cross-cutting theme and, in quarterly meetings, draws upon the GenTF membership to exchange updates on gender research from each division, discuss emerging research ideas, and identify capacity needs across the Institute.

Since 2004, the GenTF's role has expanded to meet demand for capacity strengthening and knowledge exchange on gender research methods in and beyond IFPRI. To this end, the GenTF organizes regular gender

RESEARCH METHODS AND APPROACHES

- › Randomized control trials
- › Quasi-experimental design
- › Observational studies
- › Household and intrahousehold surveys
- › Framed field experiments
- › Qualitative and participatory methods
- › Institutional analyses
- › Reviews and meta-analyses

research seminars at IFPRI, with presenters from IFPRI, CGIAR, and other research and nongovernmental organizations. The seminars provide an opportunity for researchers to receive feedback on their work and learn from a range of innovative research methods in the field.

In addition, the GenTF facilitates connections between research and practitioner communities with the aim of understanding practitioners' research needs and informing policy and programming with the latest evidence. Finally, the GenTF provides technical assistance to IFPRI researchers and external partners by responding to requests for review of strategy documents, research instruments, papers, and proposals.

IFPRI is also taking the lead in many CGIAR-wide initiatives on gender, through the CGIAR Research Programs hosted by IFPRI ([A4NH](#) and [PIM](#)) as well as its participation in the [CGIAR Collaborative Platform for Gender Research](#).

CLOSING THE GENDER KNOWLEDGE GAP

Closing the gender knowledge gap is necessary to measure progress on most of the SDGs. IFPRI contributes to the SDGs by advancing methodologies, analysis, and the provision of sex-disaggregated data in a range of research initiatives. Specifically, IFPRI examines the relationships between gender and institutions, policies, programs, development outcomes (such as nutrition, health, and agricultural productivity), and poverty reduction using both quantitative and qualitative methods to yield nuanced understandings of the developing world that can inform and enhance policy.

— HIGHLIGHTS OF IFPRI GENDER RESEARCH —

1980s: A series of IFPRI studies on agricultural commercialization and nutrition undertaken in the 1980s found that commercialization often reduced women's control of income, because men tended to take control of crops that were more profitable. In addition, even if commercialization increased household incomes, nutrition and health outcomes did not necessarily improve ([von Braun and Kennedy 1994](#)). Despite this understanding, patterns of decision making within the household did not become a focus of IFPRI's research until the early 1990s.

1990s-2000s: IFPRI's intrahousehold research program, launched in 1992, resulted in the publication of [Intrahousehold Resource Allocation in Developing Countries: Models, Methods, and Policy](#) (Haddad, Hoddinott, and Alderman 1997), which presented a broad survey of theories and evidence on resource allocation within the household, offered new empirical evidence on household decision making, and clarified why understanding who within a household controls resources and makes decisions is an important consideration for effective policy development, as well as for the design of future research projects.

1995-2003: IFPRI's intrahousehold research program focused on collecting comparable data in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Guatemala, and South Africa to test similar hypotheses in each country and thus enable comparative analysis. A questionnaire was distributed to more than 5,500 individuals with the objective of determining to what degree the allocation of intrahousehold resources affected the outcome of development policies, with a specific focus on the role of gender in intrahousehold resource allocation.

IFPRI also founded the Collective Action and Property Rights program ([CAPRI](#)) in 1995. This inter-center program promotes collaborative research about agriculture and natural resources management. Because property ownership is one of the starkest inequalities between women and men, CAPRI also seeks to enhance collaborative gender research.

2003-2008: [Household Decisions, Gender, and Development](#) (Quisumbing 2003) examined how men's and women's control of resources affect household decision making in developing countries. The book showed that increasing the amount of resources controlled by women was associated with better education, health, and nutrition outcomes, particularly for children.

2004 to late 2000s: With the establishment of the Gender Task Force in 2004, gender was increasingly integrated into IFPRI research programs. The Institute deepened its attention to research on gender and assets (tangible assets, such as land and water, as well as the less tangible, including human, social, and even political capital). The research was cross-cutting, as there were existing activities in all divisions that were related to the work. With the onset of the 2007-2008 food price crisis, a new research program focusing on gender and assets was launched. This included work on the gender-differentiated impact of shocks.

2010 onward: Evidence on the importance of assets laid the groundwork for the [Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project \(GAAP\)](#), led by IFPRI and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI). The first phase of GAAP (2010-2014) looked not only at how differences in men's and women's use, control, and ownership of assets affected their take-up of new agricultural technologies, but also at the impact of agricultural development projects on the gender gap in asset accumulation.

CAPRI, led by IFPRI, continued giving attention to gender issues as they shape access to water, forests, and other natural resources, as well as to collective action for a range of livelihood activities. In 2011-2014, IFPRI led a project on Enhancing Women's Assets to Manage Risk under Climate Change: Potential for Group-Based Approaches. Taking a closer look at the linkages among gender, assets, climate change, and collective action, researchers were able to show how climate change affects men and women differently and how development projects that incorporate group-based approaches can be successful in improving resiliency to climate change.

As a result of mounting evidence that women's empowerment is an important determinant of development success, in 2011 the US Agency for International Development (USAID) approached IFPRI and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative to develop the [Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index \(WEAI\)](#) to measure the inclusion of women in agriculture as part of the US government's Feed the Future (FTF) Initiative. Since 2012, USAID has been using the WEAI in all 19 FTF countries, and the Index has been broadly adopted by researchers and development practitioners in surveys and/or as a means of monitoring and evaluating their programs. Recently, IFPRI received additional support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and USAID to develop a project-level WEAI that can be used with work on value chains and for nutrition-oriented agricultural programs.

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A world free of hunger and malnutrition

1201 Eye Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005 USA | T. +1-202-862-5600 | F. +1-202-862-5606 | Email: ifpri@cgiar.org | www.ifpri.org

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