“Gender the Key to Successful Development Programming”

GENDER & LIVELIHOODS

Much of Southern Africa faces vast food insecurity and unsustainable livelihoods. The high prevalence of HIV throughout the region has further eroded food security and the livelihood asset base. Most populations in Southern Africa are rural and thus, a major part of livelihood and food security is based on agriculture. Among smallholder farmers, it is ultimately rain-fed and thus, insecure agriculture. Within this context, there are gender differences in agricultural production and food security, household work burdens, access to education, water, land, credit, income and other assets.

The differences between genders in this context can be compared when analyzing female headed households (FHH) in comparison to male headed households (MHH) in that the incomes of the former are generally lower than that of the latter. In Zimbabwe, FHH incomes are forty percent less than rural MHH. However, it is not merely by virtue of being a male or female head of household that determines poverty or productivity. Even where a woman is the head of the household, the presence or absence of a man creates further distinctions to the security of that household. For example, women who are single, widowed or divorced (de jure FHH) receive fewer remittances, own less land and have fewer assets than women who may head a household in the temporary absence of her husband (de facto FHH). Thus, it is not enough to assume that FHH will automatically be most vulnerable. Sometimes a de jure FHH may be better off than a de facto FHH when the presence of a male is more of a drain on resources than a support. This demonstrates the importance of not only gender distinctions but also gender relations and dynamics when analyzing the livelihood capacity of households.

Not only do gender and gender dynamics determine the condition of household income and security but they also determine the type of livelihood activities undertaken. Every country and community will have particular trends in terms of which work women or men undertake based on the opportunities and norms within their context. Thus, livelihood trends or the division of household labor tend to fall into different categories with important distinctions. The main categories include the agriculture and non-agriculture, formal and non-formal, and productive and re-productive spheres of activities. Within each of these spheres, men and women may undertake different tasks, have different forms of authority or control and above all else are able to participate and are affected differently. The distinctions are not mutually exclusive but have important implications for gender equality and gender relations.

Agriculture and Non-agriculture

There is an over-emphasis in sub-Saharan Africa on subsistence farming with limited linkages to markets. Without linking produce to markets, rural households need off-farm income. Forty-five percent of rural households studied in sub-Saharan Africa showed that income actually came from the non-farm sector such as waged work, self-employment in off-farm activities or migration. The very poor often rely on a diversification of livelihood activities because the subsistence farming without market access is not enough. Men are increasingly starting to conduct off-farm activities, leaving the agriculture activities in some parts of sub-Saharan Africa increasingly feminized.
In east and southern Africa, women’s contribution in agriculture tends to be concentrated in the cultivation of household fields while men traditionally work the cash crops and control the income. These are the typical gendered spheres of influence in the agriculture sector: the male sphere focused on the high income crops that require high value inputs and large livestock and the female sphere comprised mostly of food production reliant on available inputs, indigenous knowledge and low cost technologies.\textsuperscript{114} However, the delineation is not steadfast or consistent. In Zambia, a study collected reports of jointly managed fields and fields individually owned by both sexes. The study also showed that in some cases, women exercise considerable economic agency in the family structure.\textsuperscript{115}

As a means of diversification, both men and women have entered into non-agriculture labor activities. In Zimbabwe, a study of 12 villages found that 58 percent of men and 42 percent of women engaged in home industries. The types of industries chosen were based on gender and the male industries more remunerative.\textsuperscript{116} Some women engage in agriculture wage labor outside of the home, especially on small holder farms, horticulture and packing plants as found in Kenya, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Most of these women were young, single or widowed, or female heads of household. However, there are always exceptions. Ninety percent of women working in a South African fruit production were married.\textsuperscript{117}

**Formal and Informal**

As both men and women pursue livelihood activities outside of agriculture, they may enter into two distinct spheres of the economy, the formal or the informal. Labor markets within national economies have become increasingly “informalized” resulting in different forms of labor such as outworking, contract work, casual labor, part-time work and home-based work replacing regular full-time work.\textsuperscript{118} The majority of populations still focus their livelihood strategies outside the formal and protected economy, which leads to a certain degree of risk and vulnerability.

Not only is the actual livelihood activity unstable, but most forms of informal work are not regulated by the state and do not provide the individual with social security. This “casualization” of labor results in an extreme erosion of social protection, which makes all the men and women engaged in it more vulnerable. However, the gender difference is that women are more likely to be working in the informal economy than the informal. Because of different assets – mostly education – and institutional factors, men have more access to the public or formal sectors of work.\textsuperscript{119} As an example, women make up the majority of workers engaged in domestic work. This informal sector of the market falls below the radar of labor regulations and unions that exist to protect the worker in the formal economy. As a result, they often do not benefit from health and safety regulations, worker compensation laws, minimum wage and social security – health and retirement.\textsuperscript{120}

**Productive and reproductive**

Not only do women contribute to productive work in agriculture, informal and sometimes formal wage labor, but they are usually responsible for the reproductive work at home as well.\textsuperscript{121} Women are traditionally tasked with all reproductive or domestic work including child care, sick care, hauling water, firewood, food processing/preparation and cooking, while men very rarely participate in these activities. This requires long and strenuous hours of labor with little technology to ease the burden or save time.\textsuperscript{122}
Therefore, the time that women spend in conducting their reproductive responsibilities reduces the time available for productive activities. In cases where women of the household do take on income generation or other productive work, the reproductive work is passed on to the young girls or elderly women. These reproductive responsibilities are what is often referred to as the “burden of care” and is traditionally carried mostly by the women of the family. The burden itself is directly related to a lack of infrastructure for energy and water and poor policies and provision in the health and education sectors.

Gender Inequality and Household livelihood management

The livelihood options and strategies developed by households both impact and are impacted by gender relations. These relations are ultimately centered around the control of labor and profit in a gendered structure of authority – based on gender norms of control and domains of authority. There are incentives and disincentives within this structure of authority to invest resources and labor. For example, there may be less incentive for women or other members of the family to participate in activities where the head male of the family controls the profits. A study in Cameroon showed that women were reluctant to provide their labor to crops where proceeds were controlled by men and preferred to invest their labor in crops that they controlled. This dynamic was also linked to the use of violence on women to coerce them into working in activities they do not control. In many parts of Africa, it has been found that income-sharing or income pooling within the household is not practiced. It is therefore possible to find that married women can be much poorer than their husbands when not supported by them and thus, must rely on their own livelihood activities.

The structure of authority not only affects the management of livelihoods but also greatly affects the potential for secure livelihoods. Decisions taken by those in control may limit the ability of other family members to engage in productive activities. For example, women may not have necessary capital or assets for income generation if they have to rely on their husbands to allocate this to them. The allocation of resources to health and education will also influence the productive, or human, assets that each household has.

Hazardous livelihoods and coping strategies

Because of vast inequalities in income and economic opportunity often combined with the impact of HIV on households, women and girls as well as boys often resort to hazardous livelihoods and coping strategies. Some examples include prostitution and transactional sex, child labor, and domestic work.

Prostitution or transactional sex is a high-risk activity mostly consisting of women having sex with men for money, goods or services in return. This type of activity not only happens in the wider community but is common in schools where girls will have sex with teachers or fellow students for money that they need for necessities like uniforms, books and bus fare. Sometimes these males are called “sugar daddies” and use their resources or power to persuade girls or women to have sex. These kinds of sexual engagements not only compromise a woman’s emotional well-being but greatly increase the risk of HIV for both the male and female, unwanted pregnancy or other negative health consequences.
Child labor is also a by-product of unsustainable livelihoods in both female and male headed households. Of course, given the greater vulnerability of FHH, children from these households may be more likely to be required to work and contribute to the family earnings. There is an important distinction between child labor and child work and in most societies; all children are engaged in some kind of work either in the home or even outside wage labor.

Any work that consists of long hours prevents children from receiving education, distances them from their families, or exposes them to physical and/or sexual abuse or exploitation is harmful. Some examples of extremely hazardous work include mining and quarrying, porterage of heavy goods, manufacturing industries with chemicals or heavy machines, work in bars or hotels especially at late hours, animal herding, commercial sex work, and tobacco production or trafficking in persons.

One common form of wage labor among women and girls is domestic work. Domestic wage labor is an example of informal work with the same pitfalls of any informal livelihood activity mentioned above which effects both sexes engaged in it. However, women are more likely to be found in this sector of work, as this is one of the few options available to them. Girls, especially, are engaged in domestic work. In fact, more girls under the age of sixteen work in domestic service than any other category of child labor and it is estimated that 90 percent of domestic workers are girls. This type of work usually includes long hours, poor conditions, hard labor and distance from family, all of which constitute harmful child labor. In addition, girls and young women involved in domestic work are more vulnerable to the risks of trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation.

**Gender in Agriculture**

Since much of rural southern Africa is reliant on some sort of agriculture whether subsistence or small holder farming, cash crops or large-scale commercial farming, this section will take a deeper look at how gender inequalities in the agriculture sector and the wider society constrain the potential for growth.

In sub-Saharan Africa, small-scale farmers produce 60 to 70 percent of a nation’s food. Generally, men control the means of production and profit. Men play a role in land preparation and women in watering, planting, fertilizing, weeding, harvesting and marketing. Although men traditionally manage cash crops while women are in charge of food crops, it is important to note that women do contribute a high percentage of labor in food production for both family and the market. This distinction can vary from community to community. Women work more hours per day and more days per year in agriculture while in most cases, men maintain control of income, especially from cash crops.

The commercialization of agriculture has affected traditional gender dynamics somewhat. Non-traditional agricultural export crops (NTAE) on large scale plantations that offer contract farming are increasing. The contracts are usually awarded to male heads of households with the assumption that they can mobilize the labor of women and children. This reinforces the power of the man holding the contract. He is then likely to prioritize resources and labor for the NTAE crop, which detracts time and land from a woman’s independent activity in food crops. Yet the man will receive and control the
This change took place in Malawi when small holders were able to produce tobacco as a cash crop. Men held the necessary assets to engage in this highly lucrative business but the gender impact and consequent reduction in food production was significant.

In order to engage in agriculture activity, there are some critical assets and inputs required. These include land, credit, information, technology, and marketing and processing. However, because women and men have unequal access and control of these critical assets and inputs, they will have unequal opportunity to engage and succeed in agriculture activity. The following section explores each of these assets and inputs in terms of the gender differences in access and control.

**Land**

**Land is fundamental to a secure livelihood as a place to live, a site for economic activity and as collateral for credit.** It is also the most important asset in an agriculture economy. Moreover, owning land improves welfare, improves use of the land and provides a symbol of status within the family and society. Therefore, inequality in land allocation and ownership entrenches other aspects of inequality. In many cases, women can have access to but do not own or control their own land.

There are fundamental obstacles to women both accessing and controlling land. The obstacles are nested in the various structures and systems that organize society. They can consist of customary law and practice, formal state law and economic constraints. In customary law, a single woman in a patriarchal society needs to access land through her father, brother or uncle and a married woman through her husband. Thus, without a man, access to land is constrained and ownership is impossible. Widows in matrilineal villages are equally likely to lose their rights to own land. However, matrilineal areas, like those in Malawi and Zambia, do enable women to retain links with families of origin in order gain access to land and profit from production but ownership is still not granted. Property grabbing is especially widespread in Southern Africa, exacerbated by the high HIV prevalence. Widows suffer a loss of land and property to extended family members in this customary practice.

In addition to customary law and practice, there are formal legal clauses in some countries that prevent joint ownership of land by married couples under statutory land tenure. There is also a lack of synchronization of inheritance and marriage laws with land law. State land reform rarely addresses gender and when it does, it has been inadequate by providing land without inputs, and taking decisions about land with little representation of women and limited access to land bureaucracies. In some cases, state land tenure systems actually erode checks and balances that do benefit women in customary practice. Where good policies are in place, there are often significant gaps in the practice and implementation of those policies.

**Water**

Water is another critical natural asset required for agricultural productivity. However, efforts to establish large scale irrigation schemes often focus on large cash crops with little recognition or linkage to home gardens or reproductive needs for water at the household. Some irrigation schemes create environmental damage to existing resources. Water is also polluted due to agriculture activity where
fertilizers or pesticides contaminate the water table. In these cases, the women and girls who walk to collect safe water for household needs have to go further to find other water sources.144 Women not only need closer sources of safe drinking water to reduce the time spent on collection but also need access to water for the agriculture activity they are managing. Women’s limited access to water is largely based on their lack of ownership of land, which further excludes them from water management committees. Single women or female-headed households that do have access to water find it difficult to balance the task of irrigation, especially at night, with household responsibilities as well as mobility and security concerns.145

Other Important Assets

Where women, by formal law and customary law, can own and control land by buying from the land market, the constraints to agriculture productivity are more socio-economic in nature. These include illiteracy, lack of credit and inputs, lack of collateral, lack of farm management experience, training and advice. Most extension services such as information and other inputs such as seeds, fertilizer or equipment are often more accessible to men. Women are less likely to benefit from them.

Women also have less access to credit, because they often need to provide collateral, male consent and other forms of security against the loan.146 Although micro-credit has been one intervention developed to respond to this need, it remains inappropriate where livelihoods are under great strain and where large-scale credit schemes are still required.147

Also critical to success in agriculture is timely and adequate data to inform decisions such as needs in the markets, agriculture products and improved seed varieties. Women’s access to this information is limited. Accessing services and markets may require some amount of travel, and although both men and women face challenges in physical access due to insufficient road or railway infrastructure, social and financial realities further restrain women from traveling. Women face constraints due to their reproductive responsibilities at home or perhaps customary beliefs that prevent them from traveling alone. Women are also more likely to have challenges in securing the financial resources required for payment of goods or services for transporting and selling produce.148 Finally, since women are likely to be less educated than men, they are less able to adopt new technologies, access credit, understand HIV messages or to learn about the rights and support mechanisms available to them.149

The state plays a substantial role in facilitating or restricting access to assets required for agriculture productivity. Typically, formal programs and practice fall along the spectrum between male bias and male capture. State marketing boards and agricultural cooperatives usually buy from and distribute supplies, credit and extension services to male heads of household. An example from Mozambique showed that the Ministry of Agriculture provided extension support such as information on new technologies, livestock provision, credit and seeds or market access, but the communication from districts to rural communities were weak, and women were less likely than men were to receive these services.150 Another study showed how state agricultural development programs in Malawi and Zambia perpetuated male dominance and patriarchal control through the provision of state services throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.151 The practices favored and bolstered male leadership both at the
household and traditional levels, and also introduced disincentives for traditional foods and local varieties for which women have more influence and access.

Gradually, approaches to government and non-governmental extension services have changed to recognize the need to provide extension services as well as investments in social capital. The approaches considered a wider range of critical assets and began to consider gender. The livelihoods approach emerged as a major shift to consider bottom-up or process-oriented approaches that recognize the importance of gender differences and respond accordingly. Some of the encouraging results have occurred at the household, community and state levels.¹⁵²

Women have benefitted to some degree from wide-scale policy and paradigm shifts pertaining to agriculture. When southern African economies were liberalizing and cash crops were highly promoted and supported, some women with the necessary inputs and assets benefited from cash crops, either as independent farmers or as beneficiaries of the contract grower. Women also began to dominate the sale of fresh produce (except for maize) in informal markets that incidentally also became centers for small and medium enterprises.¹⁵³

**Participation**

There is still much to be done within governments to adjust policies and programs that support and strengthen smallholder farmers, taking into account the particular constraints that women face in benefiting from this support. However, in order to do this most appropriately and efficiently, women need a seat and a voice at the table where the decisions are being made about policies and the implementation of programs. In some cases, different forms of farmer groups have proved successful in raising key issues and challenges to the decision-making level but this has so far failed to represent or include women sufficiently. There are often a large number of women members in national unions, commodity associations, cooperatives or trusts but the leadership and influence of these groups is mostly dominated by men.¹⁵⁷ Women’s participation in water management associations remains limited.¹⁵⁸ Women are less able to exert their influence and represent the issues distinct to them because of a lower level of literacy and education as well as a lack of confidence in the issues being addressed. Therefore, membership and participation are not enough to ensure that policies meet the gender-specific needs of farmers. It is the quality of participation and ultimately, the attainment of leadership, that is important.

Research shows that women often begin same-sex groups in response to challenges and barriers faced within mixed sex groups. These have provided a platform to access credit, equipment, land and set-up autonomous bank account groups. Nevertheless, the research showed that they eventually faced significant challenges in registering their organization, certain administrative issues and uncertainty about how to engage in the policy process.¹⁵⁹

**Food Security**

Overall, unsustainable livelihoods and low productivity in agriculture mean less availability of and access to food and ultimately high levels of malnutrition. Malnutrition and food insecurity are endemic in Africa
and are the results of a number of different factors such as poverty, drought, conflict and HIV/AIDS. However, it is important to note that the approach taken to agriculture productivity can actually increase or decrease food security. Examples from the Green Revolution, especially in Malawi and Zambia, demonstrate that an over-reliance on one crop, especially a non-food cash crop like tobacco (but even a reliance on maize as a cash crop) can detract from the availability of food for households and communities.\textsuperscript{160}

Women farmers, because of their “sphere” of agriculture in traditional varieties and home gardening, have an important role to play in informing the practices that improve crop diversity and productivity of crops that improve food security in the home.

**Recommended Responses and Good Practices**

**Conduct Analysis of Gender and Livelihoods**

Both women and men may struggle to develop sustainable livelihood strategies. When households face low incomes it serves to reinforce gender inequalities as it creates a greater strain on resources and relations between men and women. Targeting the most vulnerable households, whether they are MHH or FHH, remains good practice. However, programming should be based on a clear analysis of the division of labor and gender-specific livelihood activities as well as the structure of authority, control and allocation of resources within the household as it affects males and females. There should be a way to determine the additional vulnerabilities within vulnerable households and seek to address issues of inefficiency and inequality through a process that engages all stakeholders in the household.

**Balance Household Resource Allocation for Overall Wellbeing**

It is not enough to improve the income and assets of a household. Efforts should be made to improve their allocation for the well-being of both males and females. This, in turn, can improve the potential and sustainability for additional livelihood activities that will benefit the household. Other engagements can seek to promote the sharing of reproductive work between males and females.

**Promote and Link to Social Protection – State and Communal**

Social protection is required when extreme vulnerabilities occur not because of allocation inefficiencies or male control of the household authority, but because of a lack of male presence in an environment where women and girls are denied equal access to important assets and economic opportunities. Social protection can alleviate the conditions of poverty that drive harmful coping strategies.\textsuperscript{161} It can be defined as the set of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labor markets, diminishing people’s exposure to risks and enhancing their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and the interruption or loss of income. It often comprises five major kinds of activities including labor market policies and programs, social insurance, social assistance, micro/area-based schemes and child protection.\textsuperscript{162} Social protection is one of the leading broad-based institutional solutions for improving sustainable livelihoods, by assisting those who are particularly vulnerable such
as women and children, thereby preventing further gender-based detriment, discrimination, exploitation and abuse.

Social protection is widely understood to exist at the state institutional level. However, it is important to recognize and reinforce community-based mechanisms for social protection. One of the suggestions for improving women’s livelihoods and their status in society is to strengthen informal groups that use traditional schemes to meet needs. Some examples provided were labor-sharing clubs, women only mutual aid societies, benevolent groups in churches, rotating savings clubs, cooperatives and market women's groups.163 The basic principles of these groups include pooling resources and agreeing to the rules of the membership.164 CRS has developed and supported a model based on some of these examples called Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC), which have been especially popular among women. These self-forming groups develop savings based on their own contributions. The communities eventually develop a capacity for internal lending based on their own rules, which provide a sort of communal safety net as well as self-reliance in the development of micro-enterprises. In addition, there have been promising indicators that these groups provide a platform for increased participation of women in communal decision-making.

Promote Broad-based State Policies and Programs to Assist Women

Whereas improvements in social protection can help boost broader economic opportunities and alleviate vulnerabilities, it is important that the policies closely consider the different needs and interests of men and women.165 The state has a role to play in assisting women to balance the multiple demands on their time as well as improve women's limited access to important assets and opportunities.166 Broad-based policies and programs include those related to infrastructure such as roads, energy and water. By improving communities' access to energy and potable water sources as well as ensuring suitable roads for mobility, the time women spend on reproductive work would be reduced and available for productive work. Better roads and improved policies for health care and education would increase access to clinics and schools, thereby improving women’s capabilities, boosting their livelihood potential reducing the time and energy spent in caring for the sick. In addition to improved infrastructure and social service provision, there is a need for improved policies to better support and protect women engaged in the formal and informal sectors, the agriculture and non-agriculture spheres.

Specific changes and developments require technology improvements for improved water-harvesting, more efficient stoves and other affordable housing technologies to alleviate the burden of domestic labor. Better and more flexible education policies to eliminate school fees, and provide assistance for uniforms, distance education or flexible learning options could also enable girls or women to achieve their education goals while fulfilling their other responsibilities.167 Finally and most critically, there is a need for greater emphasis in promoting male participation in care-giving and domestic work.

Improve Access to Extension Messages and Gender Responsive Agriculture Technologies

Expanding the availability of time and improving productivity for women farmers, in particular, can be further achieved through more specific policies and procedures in the agriculture sector. Agriculture institutions need new policies and interventions for extension messages that promote labor-saving
technologies and crop diversification for low-input agriculture. Some examples include intercropping to reduce weeding time, promoting high-yielding crop varieties instead of labor-intensive ones, and using conservation farming techniques that include zero to minimum tillage to reduce the need for expensive ploughs and oxen. While using high-yield varieties and improving access to them is important, women also play a vital role in maintaining crop biodiversity. In some cases, women prefer traditional varieties for ease of processing, cooking, faster maturation times, drought resistance, and better taste. Crop diversification, rather than narrow crop farming, not only diffuses labor loads over time, but also improves nutrition for households, increasing overall well-being as well as protection from food insecurity in drought situations.

More agricultural research is required to focus on women-friendly technology to save labor, increase value and improve farm equipment that is either difficult for women to use or expensive. Inexpensive and light equipment for weeding and harvesting, a traditional role of women, saves labor. Promoting natural pest management can reduce the need for chemical inputs and pesticides. The extension messages themselves need to be promoted not only through government extension workers but on rural radio programs and with women farmers or church associations. Adult literacy classes can be offered as a complement service to enable more female participation. Other examples of training which can be made available to both men and women include farmer field schools or the Peoples Participation Program of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

**Build Collaborative Support for Improving Productivity for Women’s Crops and Activities**

In some cases, women have been able to improve their agricultural productivity and livelihood security by focusing on the crops and activities they control. Rather than contesting and competing for crops under traditional male control, some women have focused on raising productivity for those crops they can benefit from. They focus on improving the productivity of home gardens and mobilizing support for needed seeds, micro-irrigation, fencing, and pest and disease control. Mobilizing support for these activities has been successful in part by engaging men to recognize the benefits of these efforts and foster wider community support. Home gardening and improved vegetable production also result in more variety for household consumption and better nutrition. A study of household food security in southern Malawi after the 2001/2002 drought found that households that diversified their cropping systems and intensified production of market garden crops were able to ward off the hunger experienced in other parts of the country.

Enable Women Farmers to Reach National and International Markets

In addition to the small changes that would make incremental improvements in woman’s time and labor efforts, there is a need for support to enhance women’s ability to evolve beyond subsistence and basic income to reach markets at the national and even international levels. This involves rethinking micro-credit schemes and considering large-scale credit to eligible women farmers. These various changes can make the difference between bare survival and successful business.

**Engage Institutions to Secure Women’s Access to and Ownership of Land**
Few of these improvements can occur, of course, for women who cannot access and own land. Changes within both the state and traditional kinship institutions are required to achieve this. On the state side, law reform must provide for gender parity in land and property rights with an emphasis on an efficient law enforcement system to prevent and restore land and property that is taken. Legal rights awareness campaigns are also required to inform the entire community about the new laws with complementary efforts to change the attitudes of men and women.174 In addition to changes at the state level, traditional leaders are in a position to resolve the gap in law and custom.175 It is crucial to engage this group of key actors to better understand the social and economic impacts of existing land inheritance practices and mobilize their support for appropriate changes.176 It is also important to recognize the role that NGOs have to play in both sensitizing the public and working with local authorities.177

**Build Collaborative Gender-balanced Decision-making in Farmers Organizations**

In order to promote and effect these changes, the participation and leadership of women is vital. There are some promising examples of improved women’s participation and leadership in farmer organizations. One example, in Zambia, is an irrigation scheme implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. A committee that was once mostly men grew to have equal male and female membership in which women eventually acquired leadership positions. A study demonstrated that this change in representation and leadership resulted in the approval of women’s applications for land allocated through the scheme and priority given to women for irrigation due to their responsibilities at home. There are other cases where women have achieved greater participation and leadership in agriculture groups by collaborating with men rather than opposing them.178

**Support and Strengthen Women’s Farmer Groups**

Another avenue for building the potential of women to influence policies or other decisions is to provide separate support to women’s groups or women members of mixed groups to build skills, confidence and knowledge about engaging in the policy process. The support must also facilitate access to decision-makers in government at various levels including the agriculture and trades sectors, women’s affairs and the national budget process.179
161 Van Der Gaag 2007


163 Mutangadura 2005

164 Ibid

165 King and Mason, 2001

166 Gawaya 2008 and Mutangadura 2005

167 Mutangadura 2005

168 Mutangadura 2005

169 Ibid

170 Ibid

171 Charman 2008

172 Gawaya 2008

173 Ibid

174 Mutandadura 2005

175 Ibid

176 Chapota, Jayne and Mason 2008

177 Ibid

178 Charman 2008

179 Gawaya 2008