

Mainstreaming Gender in Agriculture and Rural Development

The feminization of agriculture

Meeting world food needs in the future will depend increasingly on addressing issues related to gender and on strengthening the capabilities and resources of women. Approximately 98% of rural women classified as economically active are engaged in agriculture and are the primary food producers in many parts of the world. As men leave their rural homes in search of paid employment in towns and cities, the role of women in agricultural production becomes increasingly dominant.¹

Yet women typically have unequal rights, and limited access to resources and opportunities. Women make up 60 percent of the world's 1.2 billion poor. The percentage of women below the poverty line has increased by half since the 1970s, while the comparable figure for men increased only 30 percent.²

Investing in gender makes economic sense

A series of evaluations conducted by the World Bank's Operations Evaluation Department has shown that attention to gender issues helps to enhance the Bank's development effectiveness. A 1997 desk review of projects conducted in the mid-1990s found that Bank projects that took gender relations into account in their design and implementation tended to achieve their objectives more often than projects that ignored gender issues.³

The World Bank's new rural strategy, *Reaching the Rural Poor*, commits the Bank to five core areas of rural development:

1. Fostering an enabling environment for broad-based and sustainable rural growth
2. Enhancing agricultural productivity
3. Encouraging nonfarm economic growth
4. Improving social well-being, managing and mitigating risk, and reducing vulnerability; and
5. Enhancing sustainability of natural resource management.

The underlying goal is to support growth in the rural sector in a way that benefits the poor, and thereby improve efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the one on halving poverty and hunger by 2015. These goals will not be achieved unless there is an explicit and profound effort to fully address and integrate gender into rural operations.

World Bank Operational Policy 4.20⁴ recognizes the Gender Dimension of Development, and states, "The Bank aims to reduce gender disparities and enhance women's participation in the economic development of their countries by integrating gender considerations in its country assistance programs."

Gender in the World Bank's operations

In a recent review of *Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers* (PRSPs)⁵ from 2000 to 2004, 16 of the 32 PRSPs reviewed brought up rural gender issues within the poverty diagnosis. Half of these included a detailed analysis on gender, and two thirds of these PRSPs carried through with specific actions to address rural gender issues. Sri Lanka's PRSP, for instance, lists several priority actions targeted towards rural women's inclusion within policies relating to land tenure, equal representation, vocational training, working conditions, and job opportunities both within and outside the Agriculture sector.⁶

Gender in the World Bank's rural investment

The gender analysis of the Rural Portfolio highlights the following main Trends for Fiscal Year (FY) 2004:

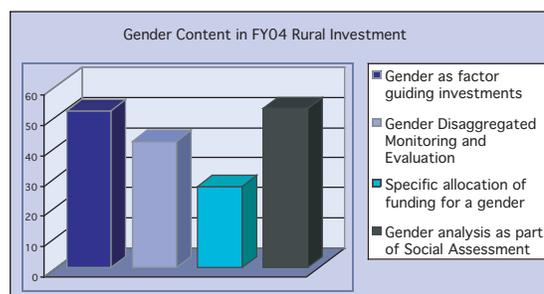
1. Lending in gender responsive actions in FY2004 was US\$308 million, that is, 4 percent of the total annual rural portfolio.
2. 48 percent of the projects in rural lending address gender.
3. The Latin America and Caribbean region had the highest allocation of resources towards gender in FY04 (US\$ 218.48m; 71 percent of all rural projects with gender related components).

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4. Almost half (47 percent) of the projects addressing gender in FY04 had gender-disaggregated monitoring and evaluation.
5. Two-thirds of the projects (66 percent out of all FY04 rural projects with gender-related components) that included a gender analysis within the social assessment consequently considered gender in project planning.

There has been an increase in the number and share of rural projects addressing gender in the recent years.



Analytical and advocacy support by an active community of practice

The Gender and Rural Development Thematic Group (GENRD) is a community of practice, with over 200 members, that brings together specialists in many fields to promote systematic integration of gender concerns in the World Bank's rural activities. It provides a forum for the exchange of experience and information on issues such as gender analysis, policy formulation, project design, and implementation. The goal of the community is to promote gender integration in all World Bank Rural Development activities, consistent with the gender strategy—*Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work: A Strategy for Action*. GENRD is the primary platform for gender-related activities in the

Agriculture and Rural Development and the Environment Departments of the ESSD Network.⁷

In recent years, the Thematic Group has embarked on a number of studies on mainstreaming gender in rural subsectors:

Gender issues and best practices in land administration projects: This study, implemented jointly with the Land Policy Thematic group, aims to identify gender-related issues in the Bank's land administration projects and highlights best practices for scaling-up and for providing guidance for future project designs. It has also examined how gender is incorporated in the legal framework and legal reform initiatives of Land Policy, Reform, and Administration programs. The findings of this study will be used to develop good practice guides on gender-inclusive project design, implementation and Monitoring and Evaluation.

Gender mainstreaming in water resources management: Water resources management is becoming increasingly critical for sustainable, and a need to identify and explore the gender dimensions within this subsector was found essential. The review maps key gender issues in water resource management, with specific emphasis on regional and community-level distinctions. It also provided recommendations and guidelines on mainstreaming gender in water resource management in the Bank. In addition, it developed a classification of water resource management activities to assess the relative merits of considering gender issues in each case.

Operational notes for Task Managers to provide guidelines on how to mainstream gender in every step of the project cycle in 11 Agricultural subsectors such as Natural Resource Management, Forestry, Livestock, rural finance among others. These notes were then customized into course modules for Bank staff and client training.

¹ Women and Food Production, FAO, <http://www.fao.org/food/tf98/docs/WFWch1-e.pdf>

² King, Elizabeth M. and Andrew D. Mason. 2001. *Engendering Development through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

³ Women Feed the World, CGIAR, <http://www.futureharvest.org/people/women.shtml>

⁴ Operational Policies (OPs) are short, focused statements that follow from the Bank's Articles of Agreement, the general conditions, and policies approved by the Board. OPs establish the parameters for the conduct of operations; they also describe the circumstances under which exceptions to policy are admissible and spell out who authorizes exceptions. OP 4.20 focuses on gender.

⁵ Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) are prepared by the member countries through a participatory process involving domestic stakeholders as well as external development partners, including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

⁶ "A Review of Rural Development Aspects of PRSPs and PRSCs, 2000–2004." 2004. ARD Internal Paper, Washington, DC: World Bank.

⁷ Visit the team's Web site at www.worldbank.org/gender-rural for an update on current activities and research on gender within the rural space.