

Module 1: Conceptual framework: gender issues and gender analysis approaches

In this module, you will:

- explore the definitions of 'gender' and 'sex';
- understand what the key gender issues are in agriculture and food security; and
- learn about the gender analysis frameworks you will use to address gender issues in climate change research in the agriculture and food security sectors (continued in next module 2).

A. Defining gender

“**Gender** refers not to male and female, but to masculine and feminine - that is, to qualities or characteristics that society ascribes to each sex. People are born female or male, but learn to be women and men. Perceptions of gender are deeply rooted, vary widely both within and between cultures, and change over time. But in all cultures, gender determines power and resources for females and males” (FAO, 2011b).

Gender is a central organizing factor in societies, and it can significantly affect the processes of production, consumption and distribution. In fact, the influence of gender on rural people’s lives and livelihoods is so substantial that “by any indicator of human development, female power and resources are lowest in rural areas of the developing world. Rural women make up the majority of the world’s poor. Notwithstanding recent improvements in their status, they have the world’s lowest levels of schooling and the highest rates of illiteracy. In all developing regions, female-headed rural households are among the poorest of the poor.” (FAO, 2011b) Social and economic inequalities between men and women undermine food security and hold back economic growth and advances in agriculture (FAO, 2011a).

In other words, gender often constrains women to an unequal position in society in comparison to men. The goal of development interventions, legal and institutional strategies is **gender equality**. This means equal participation of women and men in decision-making, equal ability to exercise their human rights, equal access to and control of resources and the benefits of development, and equal opportunities in employment and in all other aspects of their livelihoods.

Enhancing gender equality and promoting women’s empowerment has been enshrined in many international commitments, including the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Despite international commitments, gender inequalities persist.

One way toward reducing gender inequalities is through the pursuit of **gender equity**, which means “fairness and impartiality in the treatment of women and men in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. By creating social relations in which neither of the sexes suffers discrimination, gender equity aims at improving gender relations and gender roles, and achieving gender equality. The essence of equity is not identical treatment - treatment may be equal or different, but should always be considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities” (FAO, 2011b). FAO recommends that development must encompass rural women’s long-term needs and aspirations, their decision-making power, and their access to and control of

critical resources such as land and their own labour (Ibid.). The reason for this is that it is typically women's needs that have been overlooked, hence there is a specific need for their inclusion. However, we should also bear in mind that gender equity must consider both men and women. It is important to remember that women's and men's roles are a result of negotiations and relations between them.

B. Analysing gender in the agriculture sector

Gender analysis is the study of different roles and responsibilities of men and women; their differentiated access to and control of resources; and their priority needs to better understand and address gender inequalities (FAO, 2011b).

Gender analysis requires data on mixed households, as well as on male- and female-headed households. This data is often not directly available, making gender analysis essential. This is why gender-responsive and socially-sensitive climate change research work is important – it will help pinpoint data needs and data collection approaches in the context of climate change.

Gender roles

Gender is shaped by other social factors, including country/region, ethnic group, age, economic class and religion. Gender defines the roles and relations between men and women, as well as boys and girls. **Gender roles:**

- are socially constructed;
- determine social and economic activities;
- reflect biological differences;
- vary according to regions and cultures; and
- change over time.

Gender relations are the ways in which a society defines rights, responsibilities and the identities of men and women in relation to one another. Gender relations are based on power and negotiations, and gender roles are closely linked influencing the definition and development of one another.

In addition to the roles ascribed to men and women in relation to each other, men and women each have multiple roles (see Box 1.1). "While men typically play their roles sequentially, focusing on a single productive role, women must usually play their roles simultaneously, balancing the demands of each within their limited time constraints. The gender-based division of labour ascribed in a given socio-economic setting determines the roles that men and women actually perform. Since men and women play different roles, they often face very different cultural, institutional, physical and economic constraints, many of which are rooted in systematic biases and discrimination" (ILO, 1998).

Box 1.1. Men's and women's multiple roles at community level

Reproductive role: Childbearing and rearing responsibilities, and domestic tasks done by women, are required to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force. This includes not only biological reproduction but also the care and maintenance of the work force (male partner, oneself and working children) and the future work force (infants and school-going children). This work is usually unpaid.

Productive role: Work done by both men and women for pay in cash or kind. It includes both market production with an exchange-value, and subsistence or home production with actual use-value, and also potential exchange-value. For women in agricultural production, this includes work as independent farmers, peasant wives and wage workers. The work is both paid (but often underpaid) and unpaid.

Community managing role: Activities undertaken primarily by women at the community level, as an extension of their reproductive role, to ensure the provision and maintenance of scarce resources of collective consumption, such as water, energy sources, health care and education. This is unpaid work, undertaken in 'free' time.

Community politics role: Activities undertaken primarily by men at the community level, organizing at the formal political level, often within the framework of national politics. This is usually paid work, either directly or indirectly, through status or power.

(Moser in ILO, 1998.)

“In traditional rural societies, commercial agricultural production is mainly a male responsibility. Men prepare land, irrigate crops, and harvest and transport produce to market. They own and trade large animals such as cattle, and are responsible for cutting, hauling and selling timber from forests. In fishing communities, capturing fish in coastal and deep-sea waters is almost always a male domain.” (FAO, 2011b.) “Rural women have primary responsibility for maintaining the household. They raise children, grow and prepare food, manage family poultry, and collect fuel wood and water. But women and girls also play an important, largely unpaid, role in generating family income, by providing labour for planting, weeding, harvesting and threshing crops, and processing produce for sale.” (FAO, 2011b.) Women may also earn a small income for themselves by selling vegetables from home gardens and forest products. They spend this income mainly on meeting family food needs and child education.

Gender roles shape men's and women's **decision making** in all areas of household and community life, from agricultural decisions such as what crops to grow or when to harvest, to how to earn or spend income, what foods to eat and how to raise their children. Depending on the context, it may be typical for men and women to have different spheres of decision making or they may share decision making. An individual's decision making is shaped by the information and knowledge they possess, their level of participation (this may be dictated by social norms), the options available to them and the urgency and risk they perceive is posed by the decision.

Access to Resources

Women's unequal access to and control over resources compared to men is one of the underlying causes of global hunger. According to FAO, “the number of hungry people in the world could be reduced by more than 100 million people if women in rural areas were given equal access to the same resources as men” (FAO, 2011a). It is not only the access that is important though, control over resources, such as land titling and tenure rights are equally important issues. The reasoning is that if women were to have the same access to and control over resources as men this would provide for increased possibilities for food production by women. Women who have access to higher quality (and not marginal) resources are burdened less and are able to produce more.

The term **resources** refers to physical inputs such as land, livestock, fertilizers and mechanical equipment; human resources such as farm labour; social resources such as education and institutional resources such as extension services. The gender gap in access to resources between men and women and ways for reducing the gaps have been documented by FAO (see Table 1.2):

Table 1.2: Gender gaps in agriculture

Assets/ Resources	The gender gap	How to close the gap
Land	For those developing countries for which data are available, between 10 percent and 20 percent of all land holders are women, although this masks significant differences among countries even within the same region. The developing countries having both the lowest and highest shares of female land holders are in Africa.	Closing the gap in access to land and other agricultural assets requires, among other things, reforming laws to guarantee equal rights, educating government officials and community leaders and holding them accountable for upholding the law. It also involves empowering women to ensure that they are aware of their rights and able to claim them.
Labour Markets	Farms run by female-headed households tend to have less labour available for farm work because these households are typically smaller and have fewer working-age adult members. Furthermore, women have heavy and unpaid household duties that take them away from more productive activities.	Women's participation in and access to rural labour markets requires freeing women's time through labour-saving technologies and the provision of public services. It also entails raising women's human capital through education, eliminating discriminatory employment practices and capitalizing on public work programmes.
Financial Services	Access to credit and insurance are important for accumulating and retaining other assets. Smallholders everywhere face constraints in accessing credit and other financial services, but in general, female smallholders have less access to loans, for example, as they generally have less control over the types of fixed assets necessary as collateral for loans. Female smallholders may also face institutional discrimination where they are offered smaller loans than male smallholders.	Closing the gap in financial services requires legal and institutional reforms to meet the needs and constraints of women and efforts to enhance their financial capacity. Innovative delivery channels and social networks can reduce costs and make financial services more readily available to rural women.
Education	Education has seen improvements in gender parity at the national level, with females even exceeding male attainment levels in some countries, but in most regions women and girls still lag behind. The gender gap in education is particularly acute in rural areas, where female household heads sometimes have less than half the years of education of their male counterparts. Nevertheless, recent years have shown significant gains, especially in primary school enrolment rates for girls.	Women's groups and other forms of collective action can be an effective means of building relations and networks and addressing gender gaps in other areas as well, through reducing transactions costs, pooling risks, developing skills and building confidence. Women's groups can be a stepping stone to closing the gender gap in participation in other civil society organizations and government bodies and improve access to education.
Technology	Women are much less likely to use purchased inputs and improved seeds or to make use of mechanical tools and equipment. In many countries women are only half as likely as men to use chemical fertilizers. One of the underlying reasons being the obstacles of access to credit.	Improving women's access to agricultural technologies can be facilitated through participatory gender-inclusive research and technology development programmes, the provision of gender-sensitive extension services and the scaling up of Farmer Field Schools.

(FAO, 2011a.)

FAO concludes that “while the size of the gender gap differs by resource and location, the underlying causes for the gender asset gap are repeated across regions: social norms systematically limit the options available to women” (FAO, 2011a). In addition, the gains from closing this gap include higher productivity, reduced hunger, women's empowerment and other social and economic benefits.

Needs

Because the roles of men and women in societies are often different, their needs vary accordingly. With relation to promoting gender equality, women's needs can be distinguished as either practical gender needs or strategic gender needs (see Box 1.2). By distinguishing between these needs and the related constraints in meeting them, it is possible to differentiate between needs that relate to women's daily life (practical) and those that could transform current gender roles and relations.

Box 1.2. Practical and strategic gender needs

Practical gender needs are the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. Practical gender needs do not challenge gender divisions of labour and women's subordinate position in society, although they arise out of them. Practical gender needs are a response to immediate perceived necessity, identified within a specific context. They are practical in nature and often reflect inadequacies in living conditions such as water and energy provision, health care and employment.

Strategic gender needs are the needs women identify because of their subordinate position in society. They vary according to particular contexts, related to gender divisions of labour, power and control, and may include such issues as legal rights, absence of domestic violence, equal wages and women's control over their bodies. Meeting strategic gender needs assists women to achieve greater equality and change existing roles, thereby challenging women's subordinate position and aiming towards their own empowerment.

(Moser in ILO, 1998.)

C. Gender analysis of food security

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO, 2011c).

Food security consists of four components: *availability, stability, utilization and access*. Gender issues are a cross-cutting factor in all four dimensions of food security (see Table 3 below).

"Food security analysed at the household level is conditioned by a household's own *production* and household members' *ability* to purchase food of the right quality and diversity in the market place. However, it is only at the individual level that the analysis can be truly accurate because only through understanding who consumes what can we appreciate the impact of socio-cultural and gender inequalities on people's ability to meet their nutritional needs". (World Bank, et al., 2009.)

D. SEAGA approach to gender analysis

There are multiple frameworks for gender analysis. In essence, they all ask the question "Who?". See Box 1.3. for some examples of classic gender analysis questions. Asking these questions can help you understand how gender impacts the way societies and communities work. In this guide we use similar questions under each topic.

Table 1.3: Gender issues related to the four components of food security

Components	Definition	Gender Issues
Availability	Food availability means sufficient quantities of food of appropriate quality, supplied through domestic production or purchase.	Women and men each play key roles in food production, “however the asymmetries in ownership of, access to, and control of livelihood assets (such as land, water, energy, credit, knowledge and labour), negatively affect women’s food production... [In addition,] insecurity of tenure for women results in lower investment and potential environmental degradation; it compromises future production potential and increases food insecurity...The lower production reduces not only women’s potential income, but also the availability of food for household consumption” (World Bank, et al., 2009).
Stability	Stability means having access to adequate food at all times.	“Individuals whose access to an adequate diet is conditioned by seasonality are food insecure and are generally called seasonally insecure. Individuals who normally have enough to eat but become food insecure in the face of disasters triggered by economic, climatic, and civil shocks (war and conflict) are transitorily food insecure” (Ibid.). Differences in risk and vulnerability between men and women can affect the stability of their food security in different ways. “During times of crisis, women and girls are often forced to reduce their intake in favour of other household members” (Ibid.).
Utilization	Utilization means utilization of food through adequate diet, clean water, sanitation and health care to reach a state of nutritional well-being where all physiological needs are met.	“Women’s role in food utilization for food security is perhaps the most critical and outweighs the importance of their role in food production and how they spend the income they earn...Women are typically responsible for food preparation and thus are crucial to the dietary diversity of their households” (Ibid.).
Access	Food access refers to access by individuals to adequate resources (entitlements) for acquiring appropriate foods for a nutritious diet and to produce and sell food for consumption and the market.	Food distribution within the household can vary according to one’s gender. Although food may be available, adequate amounts to maintain nutritional intake may not necessarily be as accessible by women compared to men based on hierarchy within the family. Therefore, access to food within a household is determined by cultural practices and power relationships within the family.

Box 1.3. Classic gender analysis questions

- Who does what? How? Where? When? Why? (Labour)
 - Who uses what? How? Where? When? Why? (Access)
 - Who controls what? How? Where? When? Why? (Decision-making and control = power)
 - Who knows what? How? Where? When? Why? (information = power)
 - Who benefits from what? How? Where? When? Why? (benefit-sharing)
 - Who is included in what? How? Where? When? Why? (participation)
- (Hill, 2011.)

This guide uses the Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis approach (SEAGA). Developed in 1993, SEAGA is an approach to development based on the analysis of socio-economic patterns and participatory identification of women’s and men’s priorities and potentials. SEAGA tools help promote understanding about community dynamics, including the linkages among social, economic

and environmental patterns. They help clarify the division of labour within a community, including divisions by gender and other social characteristics, and facilitate the understanding of resource use and control, as well as participation in community institutions.

The SEAGA approach is a useful framework for integrating gender issues into climate change work in the agriculture and food security sectors because it facilitates the examination of the social dynamics that may shape how different members of a community and a household experience and respond to climate changes. This approach, by putting people at the centre, is one way toward ensuring that climate change related projects, initiatives and policies meet the needs of those who will be most affected. In addition, the participatory nature of this approach ensures that those who will respond to the impacts of climatic changes on their livelihoods on a day-to-day basis are engaged in the process as actors and are fully engaged in implementing climate change solutions.

Using the SEAGA approach will enable you to:

- capture the diverse views, needs/priorities, experiences and visions among members in a community;
- ensure participation of men and women and equitable distribution of benefits;
- support decision-making that reflects the views, needs and priorities of men, women and vulnerable groups: and
- understand the institutional context and make plans for how institutions can support community members, especially disadvantaged groups.

The SEAGA approach has three guiding principles:

- Gender roles and relations are of key importance.
- Disadvantaged persons and groups are a priority in development initiatives.
- Participation is essential for sustainable development and climate change adaptation.

Each of these guiding principles is described below in more detail.

Principle 1. Gender roles and relations are of key importance

“Gender equality is defined in various ways, but tends to refer to five main components: rights, opportunities, value, situation and outcome and agency” (UNDP, 2010). In the context of climate change, differences and inequalities in these five areas mean that men and women often have different capacities to adapt to or mitigate climate change. In addition, risk perception and willingness to adapt/act are important components of responding to climate change.

Furthermore, as an intervention coming from the outside, climate change adaptation or mitigation activities could reinforce existing inequalities by maintaining power and resources in the control of those who already have it.

Principle 2. Disadvantaged persons and groups are a priority in development initiatives

Disadvantaged groups are those most likely to lack resources to satisfy their basic needs such as food, water, energy, health services and housing. The disadvantaged are a priority because they are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. In addition, the elimination of poverty is essential for achieving sustainable adaptation and mitigation solutions. While women are generally disadvantaged in comparison to men, it is not necessarily always so. Also, women are not

necessarily a homogenous group, and other group attributes must be taken into account when identifying disadvantaged groups. These attributes include age, education, race, ethnicity, religion, income level and location.

Because communities are composed of a number of different groups – some more powerful than the rest, some particularly disadvantaged, and some that may be in direct conflict with each other – there is room for many differences of opinion and widely varying needs. Even within one household, decisions are more often based on compromises between different members' priorities rather than on total agreement. But it is those individuals and households, who lack control over resources essential for survival and adaptation, that are most constrained in their efforts to meet basic needs, resulting in suffering and a waste of human resources. Furthermore, often the most vulnerable groups are those that are food insecure.

Principle 3. Participation is essential for sustainable development and climate change adaptation

Participation of all socio-economic groups is essential because local men and women know most about their own situation and what is needed to improve their quality of life. These insights must form the basis of climate change adaptation and mitigation activities.

Participation in climate change solutions is crucial, because local stakeholders will be responsible for implementing the activities once the project has been set up (with possible outside support). Participation enhances self-reliance and ownership of outcomes and increases the likelihood of success.

Finally, facilitating community participation can strengthen the capabilities of institutions and community-based groups to form partnerships. Climate change solutions require that multiple institutions work together and engaging them in a participatory process from the beginning can help build a foundation for ongoing collaboration.

The SEAGA approach uses a variety of PRA tools and checklists to explore the capacities, vulnerabilities, resources, livelihoods and institutions of the target population. The tools can be divided into three broad categories: context analysis, stakeholder analysis and livelihood analysis. These are summarized below.

Context analysis

Understanding the context in any particular community – the socio-economic patterns of how people earn an income and obtain other resources – is useful in understanding the patterns of vulnerability to multiple risks, including climate risks. Some questions for understanding the context for climate change adaptation and mitigation are:

- What are the important environmental, economic, institutional and social patterns in the village? Do men and women have the same views on these?
- What were past climate conditions like, what are they like now, and what are future projections? Do men and women report seeing impacts? What are women's/men's perceptions of these?
- What are the supports for climate change adaptation or mitigation? The constraints?

Livelihood analysis

Livelihood analysis focuses on how individuals, households and groups of households make their living and the access of men and women to resources and services. It reveals the activities people undertake to meet their basic needs and generate income. Some questions include:

- How do people make their living? How do the livelihood systems of women and men, boys and girls compare? How do the livelihood systems of different socio-economic groups compare?
- What are the likely climate change impacts on current livelihood strategies? Are certain sectors or groups of people more or less vulnerable? Why? What are perceptions of women and men on these?
- How diversified are the livelihood activities of men and women? Describe the activities.
- What are the patterns for use and control of key resources? By gender? By age? By socio-economic group? How will a changing climate affect the use of resources for men and women?
- What are the most important sources of income? Expenditures for each socio-economic group, including women and men? Tribal and indigenous groups?

Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholders are all the different people and institutions, who stand to gain or lose, given a particular activity. For every adaptation and mitigation activity proposed, the different stakeholders are identified, revealing where there is conflict or partnership. Key questions include:

- What adaptation activities do different men and women propose? For what?
- For each proposed adaptation or mitigation activity, who are the stakeholders? How big is their stake? What is their historical relationship to each other?
- Is there conflict between stakeholders? Is there partnership?
- How do different stakeholders perceive the risks associated with climate change? How do they perceive the benefits of mitigation and adaptation activities?
- How can short and long-term needs of different stakeholders be balanced?
- Will men and women benefit equally?
- Will men and women differentiated by wealth benefit equally?
- Is participation of women ensured? Is participation of other marginal groups ensured? By whom?
- Is access to information ensured? By whom?