

Promoting gender inclusion in land tenure projects

🕒 Understanding the project requirements

Some land tenure projects seek to make changes to the way in which people gain access to land, e.g. through land reform. Other projects aim at making existing access to land more secure, e.g. through land titling and registration. NGOs can play an important role in helping to implement strategies to include gender in land tenure projects.

An early step is to understand what the project will include, and what it will not do. All projects have constraints. It may be possible to remedy some limitations such as:

- 🕒 by working to amend part of a law or regulation that adversely affects gender equity;
- 🕒 providing or collecting information on land rights at the local level;
- 🕒 providing special forums for informing project participants of their rights;
- 🕒 providing gender sensitization programmes to improve the knowledge of project workers of how to incorporate gender issues in their work.

Being effective in a project requires a constructive working relationship with partners, and particularly with the land agencies that are responsible for the implementation of the project. NGOs should make sure that project officials understand and appreciate the contribution that NGOs can make. ■

◎ Collecting data to monitor the effects of the project

A major problem in trying to evaluate the different impacts of a project on women and men is that the data collected before, during and after the project often does not provide appropriate information related specifically to gender.

Many projects rely only on counting the number of titles in the names of men and women, but this gives only a partial picture. NGOs can help to evaluate and monitor projects effectively by looking at both the security of rights and types of rights held by women and men. Examples of gender - differentiated data that could be collected are:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LAND HOLDINGS FOR EACH GENDER:

- ◎ size and location of land parcels;
- ◎ use of the land holding;
- ◎ labour and other inputs;
- ◎ value in terms of productivity or market price;
- ◎ beneficiaries of proceeds from the land.



LEGAL CHARACTERISTICS FOR EACH GENDER

- ⊙ rights granted by the formal law;
- ⊙ rights granted through custom;
- ⊙ comparison of formal and customary inheritance and divorce situations;
- ⊙ access to fair adjudication in cases of dispute.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EACH GENDER

- ⊙ division of labour;
- ⊙ rights to make decisions about land use, investment, and transfer;
- ⊙ proportions of household food and cash crops produced;
- ⊙ percentages of paid and unpaid labour. ■



🎯 Assisting people to participate in the project

NGOs can be effective in mobilizing people to participate in the project, for example, through the following actions.

INFORM PEOPLE OF THE PROJECT, AND OF THEIR RIGHTS:

- 🎯 Look for a variety of information sources and ensure that the information gathered represents the true picture at the local level, and not only what the formal law says.
- 🎯 Have the right message for both women and men and use the best media (e.g. community meetings, radio, newspapers), especially when illiteracy is high. Recognize that some women may not participate in open meetings and are more comfortable meeting with other women.

HELP TO ELIMINATE OBSTACLES TO PARTICIPATION:

- 🎯 Plan appropriate locations and schedules for meetings. Recognize that women may have different duties and financial resources that may affect their availability to participate.
- 🎯 Provide child care support or transportation to enable participation in meetings or training.
- 🎯 Help women to acquire the official documentation required for them to participate. ■

🕒 A quick checklist for evaluating and improving gender equity in land tenure projects

1. PARTICIPATION BY WOMEN AND MEN IN ALL ACTIVITIES

- 🕒 Does the project team have appropriate representation of men and women?
- 🕒 Does the project team understand and respect the need for gender equity, or has gender equity been marginalized as a “women's issue”?
- 🕒 Has the project team adopted specific provisions to ensure that the project recognises the differences in roles, priorities and needs of men and women?
- 🕒 How were beneficiaries contacted? Were the media and messages appropriate?
- 🕒 Do both women and men have the required official documentation to participate equally in the project, and if not how can that be remedied?
- 🕒 Do local women normally participate openly in public forums or should they be addressed separately?
- 🕒 Are there special issues with respect to scheduling or location that would improve participation by both men and women?

2. UNDERSTANDING THE RIGHTS MEN AND WOMEN HOLD

- 🕒 What rights do the formal laws provide?
- 🕒 What are the local customs or traditions (including those related to marriage, divorce and inheritance)?



- ⊙ Do the theoretical rights and practices differ from those that are actually in use and accepted?
- ⊙ Do the customs or laws vary by location (e.g. rural and urban) or by ethnic group?
- ⊙ Whose rights are recognized in formal documentation and registration processes? What is the impact of this in cases of death, divorce, or separation?
- ⊙ Have all of the rights to secondary benefits of land been considered (e.g. water rights, grazing rights, access to credit, decision-making powers, and rights to informal land transfers)?
- ⊙ What political, socio-economic, or environmental changes are occurring that may affect the rights of women and men differently now or in the future?

3. EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF INTERVENTIONS

- ⊙ Has a baseline study been conducted to determine existing rights and issues before the project commences?
- ⊙ Is there sufficient gender-disaggregated data to determine any gender differences?
- ⊙ Is the sample size sufficient to demonstrate real differences or detect biases in the surveys?
- ⊙ Who responded to questionnaires, meetings, or interviews and is there a gender bias?
- ⊙ Have the results of studies been used to make appropriate modifications to the project design?
- ⊙ Have men and women participated equally in the project and benefited from it?
- ⊙ How can good (or bad) practices be identified in the project to determine how to make the project activities better?

4. MAKING EQUITY SUSTAINABLE

- ⊙ Have the local participants understood why gender equity is important?
- ⊙ Are there local examples of tangible benefits of gender equity policies to show households, communities, or future generations?
- ⊙ Can both men and women now participate equally in decision-making regarding land resources?
- ⊙ Do both men and women now have access to the credit, resources, training, and other services needed to make effective use of their land holdings?
- ⊙ Is there a process to monitor the project's impact on gender relations over time?



This guide on *Improving gender equity in access to land* has been prepared to support non-governmental organizations that are working to promote more equitable access to land for women and men in rural communities. Land has cultural, religious and legal significance, and is the basis for food production, shelter and economic activities. In most societies, access to land has favoured certain individuals and groups at the expense of others. Women are one of the groups that often have fewer and weaker rights to land.

The guide addresses gender relations and how their structure affects access to land. It provides some answers to the questions of “what is access to land” and “why is gender important”. The guide presents strategies to improve gender equity by evaluating the current situation to identify what gender issues exist, by informing people of their rights to land, and by working to empower the marginalized. The guide concludes by describing strategies to ensure that gender and access to land are properly addressed in land tenure projects such as land reform and land titling and registration.

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