



Common issues

Following discussions on the time lines, it was possible to draw up a **list of topics and problems which are common** to everyone. The participants then worked in small groups for further consideration of the issue of land access. At this stage in the workshop, all participants had to highlight, based on their own knowledge and experience, what should be taken into account when discussing gender inequality in land access. In which areas should action be taken, what are the direct and remote causes, what are the effects on women's status and role, especially in rural areas?

The participants then drew a **mind map** with the core issue – gender inequality in access to land – in the centre, and all the ideas and suggestions on the subject added in around it. All of the participants could add new branches or extensions to the mind map, placed depending on how important the suggestion was deemed to be. Reading the mind map highlighted the significance of the problem of rural women's access to land and the extent of the obstacles to be overcome.

These **obstacles** can be placed into several categories:

- Sociological and cultural: traditions and customs, patriarchal systems, land tenure systems that favour men;
- Legal and legislative: absence or non-application of laws, dichotomy between laws and customs, laws that discriminate against women;
- Political: women's role and status, decision-making reserved for men;
- Economic: difficulties in accessing means of production and loans, limited income;
- Obstacles linked to education and training, lack of information on women's rights, and so forth.

“Prouds” and “sorries”

The trends outlined by the mind map were then used as a basis for the rest of the workshop. The participants worked in groups to analyse the main themes, discussing what is being done at present to fight gender inequality in land access, the progress that has been made, what should be done and what can be done, with each person talking about his or her own area of expertise. This exercise led to participants mentioning **sources of pride** and **regrets** in relation to specific issues.

Laws: real progress has been made as regards the willingness to revise/adopt laws aiming to improve women's status. However, the gap between laws and their implementation and the absence of repackaging and dissemination of adopted laws is still deplored.



Customs: we have noticed an increased attention to gender by traditional chiefs (religious or customary) and a heightened awareness among women and other members of the community. However, there are still obstacles to overcome, such as the dichotomy between laws and customs, the fact that it is impossible / difficult to question old-fashioned traditions and customs, and the inadequate adaptation of the gender concept to the local context.

Education: more girls are going to school and there is a real drive to promote education and literacy in rural areas. However, stereotypes are still dominant in education. The gender dimension has not been integrated into educational projects and the Millennium Development Goals are far from being achieved.

Economic and political power: when discussing this point, the participants emphasised the development of female leadership, increased involvement of women in decision-making bodies, participation of women in meetings or training courses and the existence of organisational structures led by women at local, national and regional level, not forgetting women's role in the creation of banks, health insurance funds and microfinance programmes. The participants' regrets in this area included the lack of control women have over resources, their limited access to economic and financial resources, insufficient funding of agricultural economic programmes, inadequate budgets being allocated to vulnerable sectors (agriculture, gender, health, education) or the lack of representation of women.

Taking account of gender: a growing number of studies and research works have been written on gender and gender issues are also mentioned in speeches and in discussion meetings such as those held in radio listeners' clubs. Thanks to capacity-building, women are now more able to make their voices heard. However, the gender concept is still insufficiently understood and, in general, men do not tend to become involved in defending the cause of women. Reliable statistical data and broader dissemination of the findings of studies would certainly support capacity-building and skills development for the concerned communities and their decision-makers.

