

16 Lessons out-scaling and up-scaling from *Gender and the DFID RNRRS*

Background

Very simply, gender can be said to be a social condition, as well as a biological condition. Gender describes the views, rules and roles that differentiate men from women⁵³. The core gender issue in development is inequality in the power to change. The premise is that tackling power relations between men and women will lead to equitable and sustainable development.

Gender awareness means understanding how male and female roles in any particular context affect poverty. This has significant lessons for out-scaling and up-scaling research results. Most of the lessons learned from the synthesis study of gender in relation to the DFID RNRRS relate to out-scaling and there are few pointers as to how to deal with gender issues in up-scaling.

Key points

- Much remains to be done to understand gender relations in development.
- Acknowledge that gender roles have deep roots in tradition, culture and religious law and will be slow to change. Inequality is still acute at the grass roots level in many developing countries.
- Gender relations cannot be ignored as they play a key role in the development process.
- Take into account that women do as much as men in agriculture.
- Take into account that men and women make decisions based on different priorities and get information from different sources.
- Revisit and augment gender-disaggregated data.
- Develop a set of clear, easily implemented guidelines on gender for out-scaling and up-scaling research outputs.
- Do a gender analysis before starting.
- Key gender-related factors that should be considered when out-scaling and up-scaling research results are health, education, household security, markets and management of natural resources.
- Avoid gender-neutral terms such as 'community', 'farmer' and 'fisher'.
- Women are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to influencing policy.

Lessons learned

Much remains to be done to understand gender relations in development. Our understanding of gender relations is growing, but much remains to be done. Plenty of the Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy projects gathered information on gender roles (R7359, for example, looked at how men and women farmers get and use information). This information is a starting point for further work and learning.

Acknowledge that gender roles have deep roots in tradition, culture and religious law and will be slow to change. These roles mean that women are less literate, less economically and politically free, and more exposed to shocks and stress than men (Box 16.1). And, it must be remembered that while many developed countries accept female empowerment and equality in gender relationships, this is not the case in many developing countries.

Despite the entrenched nature of these roles, however, social and economic development will change the way societies operate. And while changes grounded in local customs are more likely to succeed than imported changes, they are not likely to come into play over the space of only a few years. This means that any work to out-scale or up-scale research outputs needs to, at the outset, take gender roles as they stand and work from there.

Box 16.1

Examples of laws and customs that restrict women

Hard-core poor Hindu women sort, grade and sell fish door-to-door in coastal Bangladesh. Here people think that women shouldn't be allowed to sell fish. So, these women are often abused by Muslim traders (R7969 Fish distribution from coastal communities in Bangladesh—market and credit access issues).

Another problem is the fact that laws often give ownership to males. This means that women cannot borrow money as they have no collateral with which to secure loans (see R7799 Changing fish utilisation and its impact on poverty in India, and R8108 Strengthening the contribution of women to household livelihoods through improved livestock production interventions and strategies in the Teso farming system).

Gender relations cannot be ignored as they play a key role in the development process. None of the RNRRS programmes focused explicitly on gender. But in the last five years of the Strategy, many projects acknowledged that gender relations

⁵³ "gender embodies the roles and duties and obligations of men and women which have been reinforced through the centuries by institutions: the household, the market, the community and the state" P6 Gender and the DFID RNRRS: A Synthesis. Final Draft December 2005 Elizabeth Bennett

played a key role in the development process and that many of the key beneficiaries were women.

It must be remembered, however, that gender and women are not necessarily the same thing. It is the unequal relationships between men and women—gender roles—that need to be tackled for development to move forward. Changes in gender roles are part of the long-term process of cultural change.

We need to take into account that women do as much as men in agriculture. Though their tasks may be different, men and women often do an equal amount of the work involved in growing crops and raising livestock (Box 16.2). In addition, women bear the brunt of work involved in looking after children and the home. So it needs to be remembered that any new ways of farming or raising livestock will affect both men and women, though men and women will perceive and experience the changes differently.

Box 16.2

Women do as much as men although it is rarely documented

In farming communities, women usually look after the goats and poultry, and milk animals. They also look after seeds and grow staple food crops—like sweet potatoes in Uganda and cowpeas in Nepal.

In forests, men carve and make furniture from wood whereas women collect firewood, gather nuts and berries, brew beer and make small items to use in the home.

In fisheries, women work in the pre- and post-harvest sectors. They usually process and market the catch, for example.

National production statistics—hardly ever disaggregated by gender—track primary production (male-dominated) rather than harvesting, processing and marketing (female-dominated). There is a clear split between what men do and what women do and this needs to be taken into account when out-scaling and up-scaling research results.

Men and women make choices based on different priorities and get information from different sources. They perceive and experience things differently. For example, a study in Kenya and Tanzania found that men thought fishing was the most important activity whereas women thought farming was the most important (R8196 Understanding fisheries-associated livelihoods and the constraints to their development in Kenya and Tanzania).

Because men and women have different priorities, they also tend to make different choices. Another study found, for example, that women and men choose different fish for self-recruiting species in aquaculture (R7917 Self-recruiting species in aquaculture, their role in rural livelihoods), with women choosing those known to be good for children and pregnant women.

In Kenya, for example, men are likely to buy veterinary drugs from major centres whereas women, who cannot travel far from home, rely on local drug sellers. Men tend to buy preventive drugs because they can plan in advance, whereas women buy cures when animals are sick (R7359 The delivery of veterinary services to the poor). This kind of information is important when planning how to give information on animal health to women and men.

Many projects provided training or skills development and found that women tend to learn and share information in different ways to men. Women, for example, tended to learn through family and friends, while men listened to the radio, read and talked to their friends in restaurants and cafes. The information gap between genders can be narrowed by feeding information targeted to women into their natural communication channels.

Revisit and augment gender-disaggregated data. The Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy projects also collected a lot of data on gender that was never analysed. So, no conclusions could be drawn. There is still a huge gap in gender-disaggregated data about rural incomes, for example.

Analysis of gender-disaggregated data collected in some of the RNRRS projects could shed light on gender issues which might be useful when working to out-scale and up-scale research results. For example, project R7917 (Self recruiting species in aquaculture, their role in rural livelihoods) collected a significant amount of data on gender roles in the management of fisheries resources, as well as data on the distribution of assets and income within households. This could provide information on who owns household assets and how ownership patterns might affect out-scaling⁵⁴.

In Laos, women traditionally manage household budgets. They are also in charge of marketing the fish produced by small-scale rice—fish culture systems. A significant set of gender-disaggregated data was collected by one project (R6830 Technical, social and economic constraints to rice fish culture in Laos, emphasising women's involvement). However, it is not yet clear whether men and women take decisions jointly or separately on whether to sell fish, at what price, in which markets or whether they went to market separately or together. Although both men and women seemed have an equal input in farming the fish, it was also not clear whether raising production would increase or lessen women's workloads.

It is also not clear whether men and women have equal access to opportunities to learn. Some projects recorded the numbers of male and female participants in training courses and workshops, while others did not.

Develop a set of 'clear, easily implemented' guidelines on gender for out-scaling and up-scaling research outputs.

'Women only' projects may be destructive to gender relationships in the long term. The consequences of empowering women have to be thought through to make a positive difference to gender

⁵⁴ "Given the predominance of income-generating activities promoted in many of the projects, more thought needs to be given to collecting data on how increased incomes will be used and how they will impact on gender roles in the household." P35 Gender and the DFID RNRRS: A Synthesis. Final Draft December 2005 Elizabeth Bennett.

relations. The role that men play in allowing and helping women to change is integral to success.

In a project in Zimbabwe, for example, men felt threatened by women's success in raising poultry (R7524 The use of oil-seed cake from small-scale processing operations for inclusion in rations for peri-urban poultry and small ruminant production). Plus, even though looking after poultry in the home is considered women's work there, it's men who traditionally take the birds to market. This meant that even though women were producing more birds for sale, they didn't receive the proceeds to reinvest in more birds or poultry houses or to improve their standard of living—because the men controlled the cash. In this case, it was suggested that involving men in the poultry production scheme would help to ensure that the benefits were shared equally.

By only targeting women, gender relations may be worsened. For example, a project⁵⁵ to produce agroforestry manuals for illiterate women may inadvertently have ignored the needs of illiterate men, who may have been equally in need.

Undertake a gender analysis before starting. Work to out-scale and up-scale research results needs to set out exactly how men and women will benefit. Who wins and who loses may be based on gender. So, gender analysis needs to be a key part of any plan to out-scale and up-scale research outputs, as it can help us to understand gender roles and why some groups are poorer than others because of those roles.

The Crop Post-Harvest Programme carried out a thorough gender analysis before starting a project to improve the process used to convert bambara groundnut into flour. The analysis found that the project was likely to benefit women more than men because more women farm bambara than men. When it came to marketing both men and women would benefit equally. The gender analysis also found that women often needed permission to travel and attend meetings, which could affect the degree to which they benefited.

Gender analysis of conflict is critical to the management of natural resources. One project (R7856 Strengthening social capital for improving policies and decision-making in natural resource management) found that one-third of conflicts involve women. Women feel that local political structures are more effective at solving conflicts because they are at a disadvantage in traditional male bonding and network structures.

Key gender-related factors that should be considered when out-scaling and up-scaling research results are health, education, household security, markets and management of natural resources. The synthesis study evaluated gender issues according to six criteria (Box 16.3). It may be useful to consider these when developing indicators for assessing gender issues in out-scaling and up-scaling research results.

⁵⁵ R6072 Agroforestry manuals for illiterate women

⁵⁶ See R7917 Self-recruiting species in aquaculture, their role in rural livelihoods.

⁵⁷ Waterhouse, R. and S. Neville 2005 Evaluation of DFID Development Assistance: Gender equality and women's empowerment phase II Thematic Evaluation: Voice and accountability. DFIS Working Paper 7 May 2005. DFID: London.

Box 16.3

Key gender-related factors to consider

Health. Different types of food, as well as medicines, may be allocated differently within a household among women, men and children, and this affects their health in distinct ways. Thus, the actual health benefits of out-scaling a crop that—in theory—is more nutritious, need to be realistically assessed before out-scaling. Self-recruiting fish species have particular benefits for women, for example⁵⁶. If more self-recruiting species can be caught, women eat more, thus improving their diet and health.

Education. Access to education—including education about new crops or new farming and fishing techniques—differs between genders. So work to spread new options needs to be carefully targeted.

Household security. It is important to consider gender divisions in making decisions about how to spend household income. In addition, women often suffer more than men from policy decisions about natural-resource management in which they have no say.

Markets. Do men and women have equal access to markets? How will constraints related to transport, getting information about markets, and being able to leave home to go to market, affect the success of out-scaling a new option?

Management of natural resources. How would gender differences related to natural-resource management (at local through to national levels) affect the uptake of a new option? Overall, women take little part in policy-making processes⁵⁷. Women can be helped to take part by making sure both men and women have skills to do this—teaching them to read, giving them information, teaching them leadership skills. All members of the community need to be involved otherwise there is no guarantee that women's voices will be heard even though they might sit on committees that influence management and policies. However, more women taking part can be seen by men as a threat (R7524).

Ownership of assets. We must also consider gender differences in control over and access to assets, including user rights, animals and technologies. Loans taken out by women are often commandeered by men. Although goats, poultry, vegetables and self-recruiting fish species are often considered to be household assets and fall to women to look after, the extent to which women control these assets—selling, spending the money earned—is not clear. In Nepal (R632) women and men make decisions about selling goats equally, whereas in Zimbabwe women cannot make decisions about selling their own livestock.

Avoid gender-neutral terms such as 'community', 'farmer' and 'fisher'.

Gender-neutral terms tend to blur what are often clear distinctions between female farmers and fishers and male farmers and fishers. In Nepal, for example, most chickpea farmers are women. Here, women traditionally farm chickpeas 'the poor person's protein' (R7885 Promoting the adoption of integrated crop management in chickpea by poor farmers in Nepal). As farmers' (women's) incomes increased, they spent more on health and education. So, the gender of the farmer makes a difference as, if the farmers are men, their priorities for spending any extra income might be different and have a different impact on poverty.

Again, many farmers who grow Phaseolus beans 'the meat of the poor' in Tanzania are women. So, many of these women farmers were included in trials to improve varieties (R7569 Participatory promotion of disease-resistant and farmer-acceptable Phaseolus beans in the southern highlands of Tanzania). Similarly, many small-scale sweet potato farmers in Central Uganda are poor women who head households (R8273 Improving the livelihoods of small-scale sweet potato farmers in Central Uganda).

In coastal Bangladesh, 10-20% of fish traders are Hindu women who sort, grade and sell fish door-to-door. Information on markets where generally only the poorest women work—fish markets in Bangladesh—is not generally collected (R7969). Because of this, women's work is invisible and seldom valued on equal terms with men's.

But, in West Africa, women who process and market fish put up money for fishing voyages. Some own ships and control fleets. Their strong networks and alliances help them do well in buying and selling fish. Here, gender is again an issue.

Women are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to influencing policy.

At the grass-roots level, some projects found women often do not have time to take part in community capacity-building activities because of their domestic chores and other activities. Gender has a powerful role in governing who does what in communities. This has implications for out-scaling.

The synthesis study, in its discussion on gender and development, did note that "women's organisations in the south are often staffed by women drawn from the elite who are pursuing policies that benefit them—that is, policies that will not prove to be a threat to their social or political class"⁵⁸. This perhaps has implications for up-scaling.

This synopsis of lessons learned for up-scaling and out-scaling research is drawn from:

Bennett, E. 2005. 'Gender and the DFID RNRRS: A synthesis'.

See

http://www.research4development.info/pdf/ThematicSummaries/Gender_synthesis_study_P1.pdf

⁵⁸ Taylor, V. 2000 Marketisation of governance: Critical feminist perspectives from the South, DAWN: Suva, Fiji