

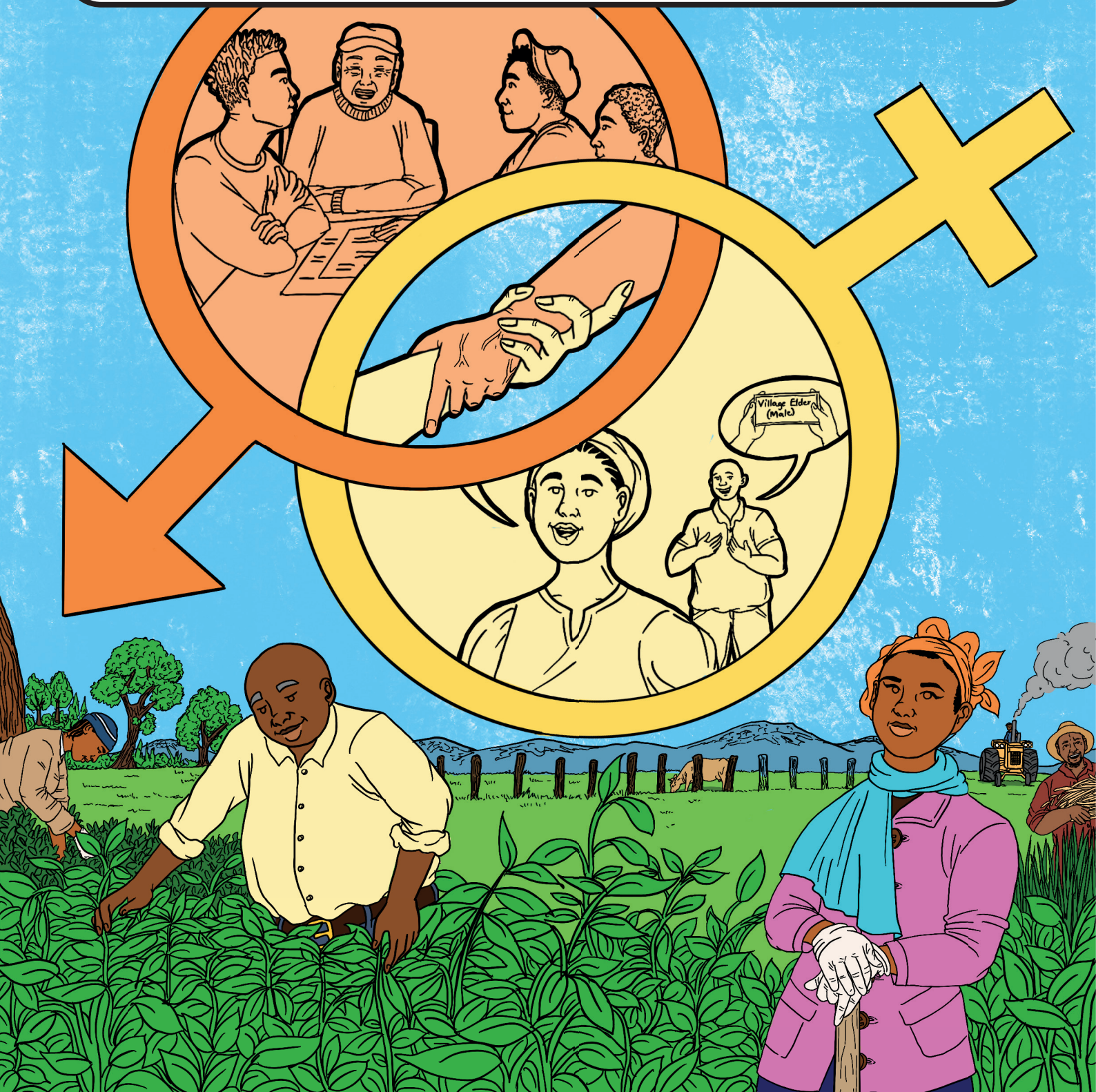


**WOW** //

Work and  
Opportunities  
for Women

# Community Dialogues on Gender and Social Norms:

## Facilitation Guide for Village Based Agents



# About This Guide: A Note for Farm Africa Trainers

The purpose of this guide is to help Village Based Agents (VBAs) and lead farmers trained by Farm Africa to facilitate dialogues within their communities on gender and social norms.

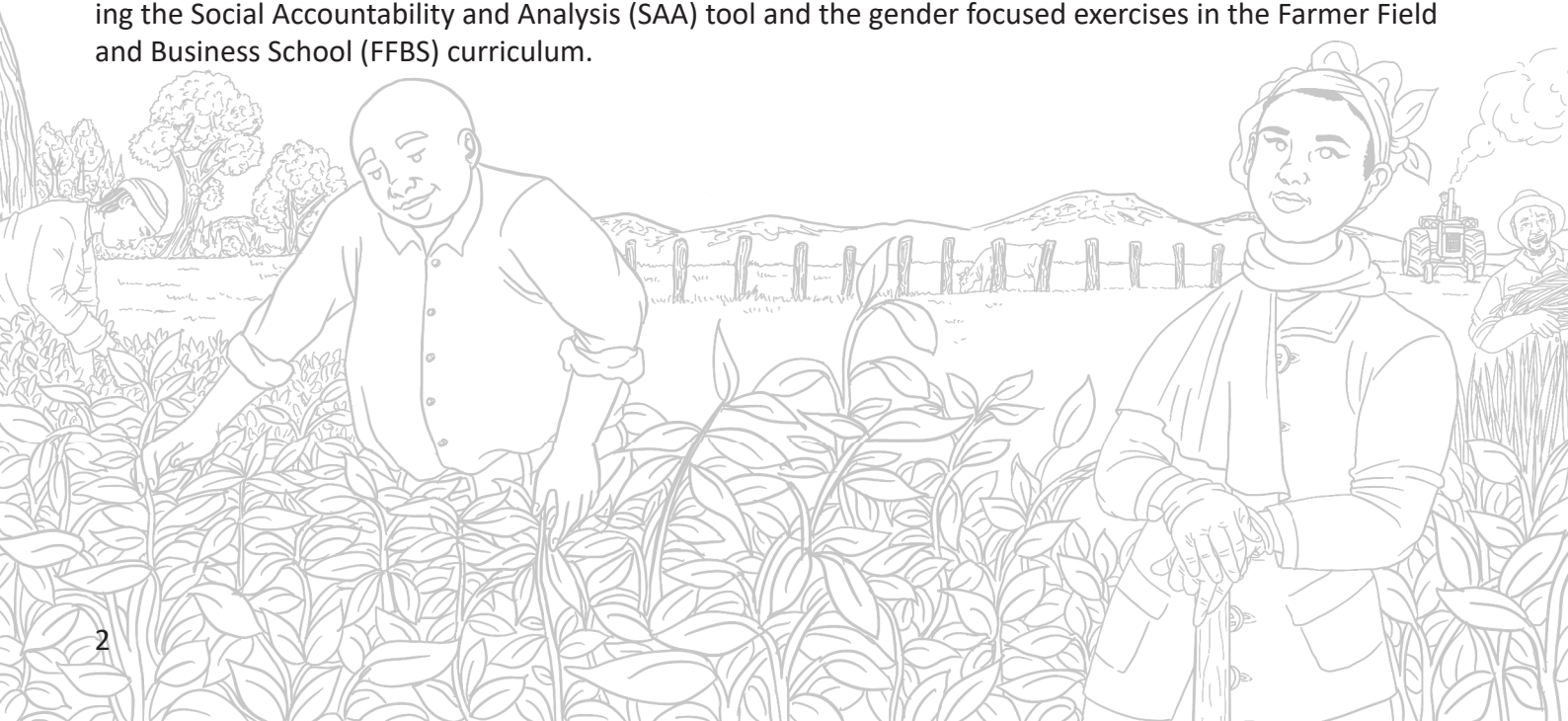
The Work and Opportunities for Women programme (WOW) which is funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), has been providing gender technical expertise to the Waitrose Foundation's Climate Resilience project implemented in Kenya by Farm Africa. Addressing gender and social norms has been an important part of this technical support. WOW has provided gender and social norms training to Farm Africa's team of trainers and facilitators, and they have been incorporating these concepts and awareness into all of their engagements with outgrower farmers and farmworkers.

The Climate Resilience project will end in September 2024. To help ensure the gender and social norms awareness-raising continues beyond the end of the project lifetime, WOW has agreed to provide a short, accessible facilitation guide that can be used by Village-Based Agents (VBAs) themselves when they interact with farmers in their groups. VBAs meet regularly with their farmer groups to share knowledge, advice, and information about new techniques and climate adaptation strategies. The purpose of this short guide is to help VBAs start a conversation at community level about gender and social norms, and how they could impact on farmers' capacity to take up suggested actions aimed at bolstering their resilience.

Gender norms are deeply rooted in communities, and change takes time and effort at various levels. This guide is just a first step in opening the door to these conversations and providing a space to reflect on individual and collective beliefs, attitudes and perceptions. This process will need to be revisited; but over time may lead to shifts in social norms.

This facilitation guide introduces 3 key concepts: sex and gender, power, and social and gender norms; and gives a simple explanation for each, along with a visual and a practical exercise for each. This is intended to allow men and women with different literacy levels and confidence in speaking in public to participate actively in discussions. Men and women are trained together so they can share different points of view, complement each other's opinions, and challenge themselves and each other on what needs to be done to shift harmful gender norms within their community.

The guide draws on training approaches used by WOW's consortium partner CARE International UK, including the Social Accountability and Analysis (SAA) tool and the gender focused exercises in the Farmer Field and Business School (FFBS) curriculum.



# Talking about gender and social norms in the community

The purpose of this session is for us to think about gender roles and social norms in our community. We are all farmers, and we always try to be the best farmers we can be, which sometimes means trying new methods and using different techniques to what we have done in the past. This is becoming more and more important as we see the weather changing around us, and the old ways of farming don't always produce the harvests and the yields we need.

We have been doing a lot of training together about things like climate change, changing rainfall patterns, using more green energy, clean cookstoves, how to preserve our trees and how to start other businesses that can generate money for our families. Sometimes it is hard to make these changes, or get the best results from our efforts because of certain gender roles and social norms that exist in our community. Those norms say: 'Women should do this, but they can't do that, and men should do these things but not those things.' Today we want to talk about why this is. Why are certain roles given to men and to women, to boys and to girls? How do these roles impact all of us as farmers – the men and the women - and perhaps limit what we can do? Are these roles still relevant in modern times? Can we shift these norms or are they permanent and unchangeable?

We know that some of these topics are hard to talk about, and that is okay. We just want to open up a space for conversation. We will go through a journey of reflection together today. We will reflect on ourselves, our relationships with people close to us and in our community. We will discuss how we act as individuals, as mothers/fathers and as community members. I am here to guide the process, but it is your participation that will push us forward. Your contributions are what will enrich this process and give it meaning. Therefore, it is important that we get to know each other so that we get comfortable with each other as we go through this process together. Let's remember:



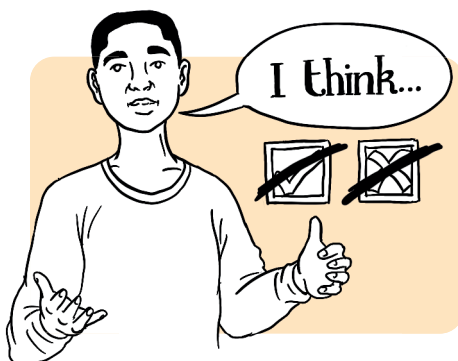
**We are here to explore together.**



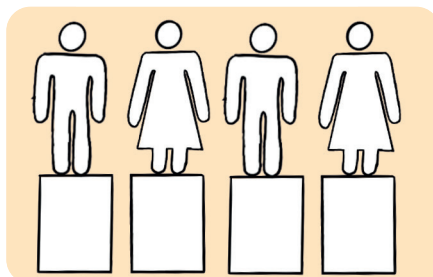
**People should feel free to say as little or as much as they want.**



**Everyone is welcome here, and everyone's views matter.**



**There are no wrong or right answers. Today is a chance for us to learn from each other.**



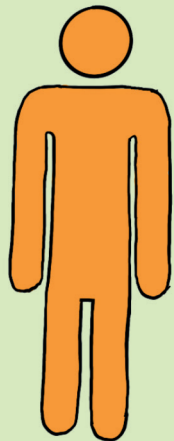
**No one is more or less important here. We are all equal.**



**Everyone can ask and answer questions.**

# Gender & Sex - Understanding the Difference

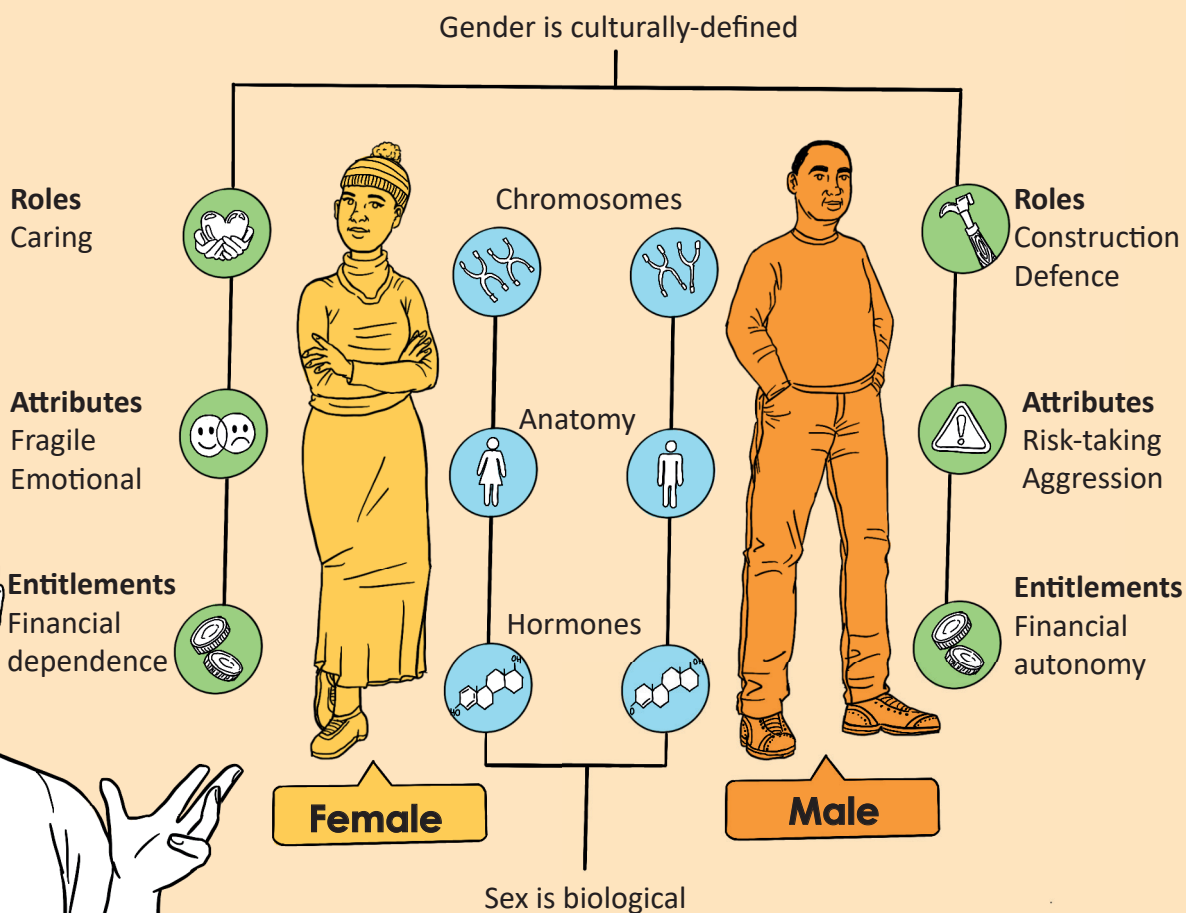
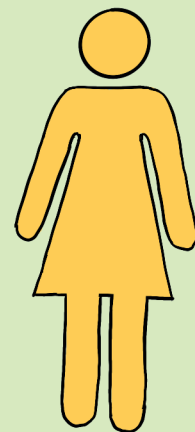
We know that most people believe there are very different roles for men and women. But why is that? We are going to start by looking at where these beliefs about difference come from. And to understand this, we need to understand something very basic: the difference between 'sex' and 'gender'. One of these can be changed; for the other, it is more difficult.



So: What is a man? What is a woman? If you are talking about sex, you are talking about something biological.

'Sex' means the **physical** and **biological** differences between men and women. For example, women's bodies can give birth to babies, and men's voices change at puberty. Your sex is typically ascribed to you **at birth**.

Gender is not biological: it is cultural. We say 'gender' is **socially constructed** – that means, gender is a set of roles, behaviours and attributes that society considers appropriate for men and women. For example, women are considered emotional, and men are considered risk takers.



# Exercise 1: Complete the Gender Box

Let's try to demonstrate this with an exercise. Remember: we are exploring and learning together. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers!



**Time required:**  
1 – 1.5 hours

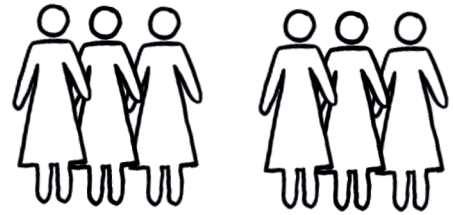
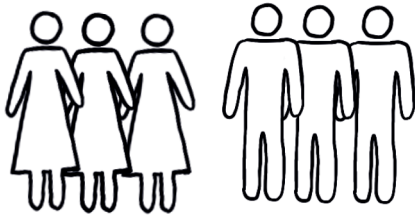


**Materials:**

- two large pieces of paper
- markers/pens

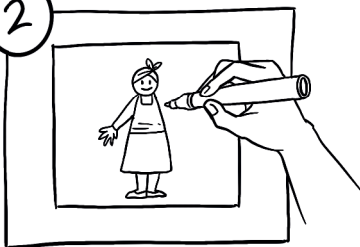
## Steps:

1



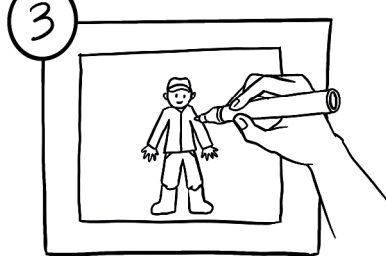
Divide the participants into 2 groups – one, all women, the other, all men. If there are no men present, one group can pretend to be men just for this exercise.

2



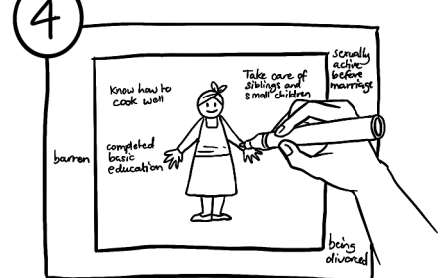
Ask each group to draw a square on a large piece of paper or a white/black board. Inside this box, ask the women's group to draw a "typical" woman.

3



Ask the men's group to draw a "typical" man – they can use words or pictures.

4



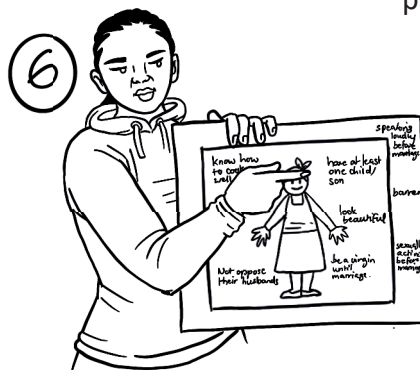
Ask each group to discuss: What is your experience of the roles, behaviours, and norms that society expects of the "typical" woman and man? Capture this in words or pictures inside the box.

5



What about the roles, behaviours, and norms of a "non-typical" woman and man? Draw/write this outside of the box.

6



Ask one group to present their gender boxes. Invite the whole group to ask questions or add more points.

Ask the group to discuss:

- What happens if you practise behaviours outside of the gender box?
- Does society accept the women and men who are outside the box? How are they viewed?
- Are the roles and expectations assigned to men and women by the community the same or different?
- What are the consequences (both positive and negative) people experience when they “step outside” the box in our community?
- Are the consequences the same for men as for women?
- How do gender roles and expectations of women and men affect your ability to work in the homestead and outside the home?

## Gender Box Example

Has many men suitors

Does not listen to her husband

Drunkard

Disorganised household

Thief

Barren

Dresses immodestly

Gossiper

Homemaker Submissive

Has children/sons

Budgets for her home

Takes good care of her home

Nurturing/caring

Trustworthy

Cooks and cleans

Perseveres



**Female**

Religious

Provider Protector

Wealthy

Married

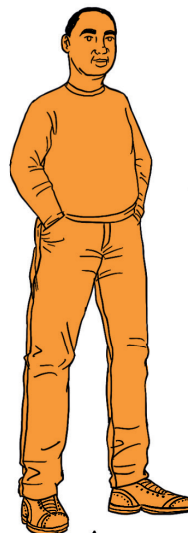
Has children/sons

Religious

Articulate/confident

Disciplined/responsible

Trustworthy



**Male**

Main decision-maker

Has many women

Emotional

Irresponsible

Hangs around women

Jobless

Cries

Controlled by his wife

Does household chores

# Power: Who holds power and why does it matter?

Now that we understand that gender roles are constructed by society, we want to reflect on how these roles are assigned. Who has power to decide? Are there different kinds of power? And what is the role of gender when we think about who holds the power in the household, on the farm, in our communities and in society at large? What happens when these power dynamics change?

## What is power?

Power exists within us, in our relationships, in our homes, and in our communities. It shapes the way we interact with others and can be used negatively and positively. It impacts on our ability to make decisions and do certain activities.

**Gender shapes power relations at all levels of society.** There are four different, commonly recognised forms of power:



### Power over

This means the power to control others, often associated with force and domination and can have negative associations such as fear and abuse.



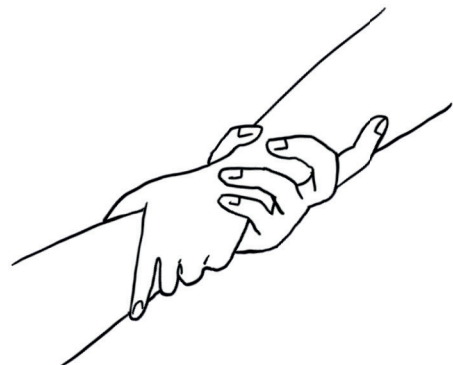
### Power to

The power to achieve or accomplish something using one's unique abilities e.g. planting a garden to have better food.



### Power within

A sense of self awareness and self-worth. The power to achieve one's goals and strength to achieve change e.g. reaching out to help others in need.



### Power with

This is the power to act together to achieve common aims e.g. community members coming together to demand action from authorities.



- Power can come from different sources, like physical strength, age, gender, wisdom, social position (status), wealth, information, education etc. Different situations require different types of power.
- In society, gender norms give men power over women – from laws and policies down to household level interactions.
- Some men (and women) feel that men need to have power over women in order to maintain order and stability.
- When people are in a position to exercise power over others, they can fail to respect other's dignity, perspective or humanity.
- Men and women within families can take responsibility toward sharing power with each other and using this shared power jointly in positive ways.

## Discussion Questions:

- What makes one person have more power than the other? Allow participants to respond before giving examples: social roles, ownership and/or control over assets/resources, sex, age, position in the household, level of education, wealth, social status, physical strength, etc.
- What are the implications of a person holding all the power in a household/on the farm?
- What is the benefit of sharing power in a household/on the farm? How can power be shared or redistributed within the household/farm?

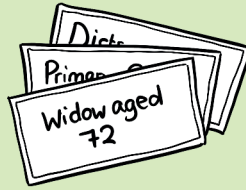


The next exercise will help us to get an understanding of power, participation and leadership in relation to gender and other intersecting social identities like clan membership and social status and how inequalities can influence access to and participation in decision-making and leadership structures.

# Exercise 2: Power Walk



**Time required:**  
30 - 40 minutes

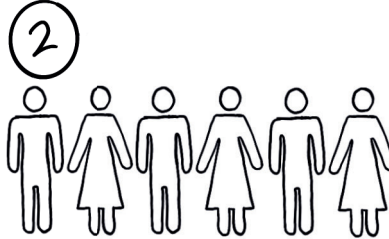


**Materials:**  
slips of paper with the power walk characters on them  
**OR**  
quietly tell individuals their characters

## Steps:



At the start of the session, assign one of the characters to each participant. Ask participants not to let anyone know the character they are representing.



Participants stand next to each other in a line. Explain you are going to read a statement. Everyone must imagine if this statement applies to their character.



If the answer is 'yes', they should take one step forward. If the answer is 'no', they stay where they are.



Remind participants they should always keep in mind the character they are representing while responding 'yes' or 'no'.



Read the statements below one-by-one and allow time for participants to make their decision.



After all statements have been read, ask people to reveal what character they were. Ask a few people how they felt being at the back and others, at the front.



Discuss with participants the meaning of power, and the reasons why some of them felt powerful, while others did not.



Reflect on how power relations play out in farm and household activities. Talk about how power imbalances can affect people's decision-making and actions.

# Power Walk Statements

- I can influence decisions made at the community level
- I get to meet visiting government officials
- I can read information posted around the community/village
- I can make decisions about how money is spent in my family
- I feel comfortable speaking at a village meeting
- I can move freely within the village and surrounding areas on my own
- If there is a community meeting being held, I feel I have time in my day to attend
- My family supports me to do activities I am interested in
- I feel I can influence the resources and services available in my community, e.g. street lighting, water, health
- If I have a problem or concern, I know where or who to report it to

# Power Walk Characters

Male Religious leader	Female leader of church group	Female head of household	Woman with physical disability aged 35	Primary-school boy
Elderly male without income-generating activity	Female VSLA member	Married girl (underage)	Male Agricultural Extension Officer	Male District Official
Female Community leader	Girl looking after sick mother and younger sibling	Female Village-based agent/lead farmer	Male Village elder	Widow aged 72

# What are social norms and why do they matter?



We are now going to reflect together on social norms: what they are, how they impact both positively and negatively on people's behaviour, and how some social norms need to be challenged to support gender equality and empowerment for the greater good of our communities.

- Social norms, beliefs and practices shape the world and the way we live our lives. Social norms can be positive (visiting a sick neighbour, contributing funds for a relative's wedding, welcoming guests with food and drinks), or negative (women not perceived as good leaders, daughters cannot inherit their fathers land).
- A social norm is made up of our beliefs about what others do, and our belief about what others think we should do.
- Social norms are maintained because of an expectation of approval or disapproval from others for our actions.
- Gender norms are a type of social norm. They are expectations about how one should behave based on their biological sex and social perceptions of gender.
- Some social norms limit people's ability to take decisions or do certain actions. These norms need to be challenged by bringing about changes in individual and group attitudes, leading to greater gender equality in households, communities and society at large.

## Discussion Questions:

1. Show the social norms visual and ask people what they see in the photo. Point out the individual in yellow and ask about the difference between the two photos.
2. Ask farmers to share some examples of positive social norms in their community. Then ask them to share some of the negative social norms in their community and explain who these norms impact and how.

# Waiting for Your Turn



We wait our turn because others do...



...and because it is expected, others would disapprove of cutting in line.

# Exercise 3: Vote with Your Feet!

Our next exercise will help us explore different opinions that people in the community hold about gender and social norms.



**Time required:**  
30 minutes



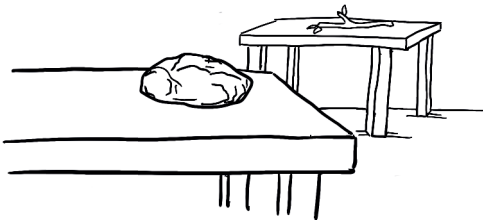
OR



**Materials:**  
labelled cards/paper  
OR  
a stone (for AGREE) and a stick (for DISAGREE)

## Steps:

1



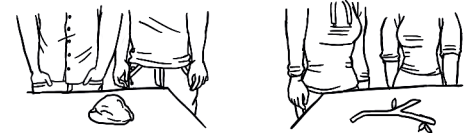
Place the agree/disagree cards or stone/stick at opposite ends of the space.

2



Read one statement from the list on the next page. Ask participants to reflect on their opinion without talking then move to the card/stick/stone that represents their opinion (agree/disagree).

3



Once all participants have moved, ask them to discuss with those near them why they have chosen that group (if they feel comfortable to share).

4



Invite participants of each group to share their reason for agreement/disagreement.

5



After hearing the views of each group, ask the participants if anyone would like to change their place and move to a different card/stone/stick. If participants moving are willing to share, ask them the reasons why they have decided to move.

6



Move on to reading out the next statement from the list and follow the same process for steps 2-5 above.



## Reflection Questions:

1. Did this discussion change anyone's understanding of the commonly held beliefs and norms in our communities?
2. Who is adversely affected by these norms? Does anyone benefit from these norms?
3. Is there a need to change any of the norms we discussed?

## Social Norms Statements

- Women are not allowed to plant trees.
- Women cannot own land.
- Women are good decision makers for products to use for cooking and lighting.
- Men make decisions on purchases or budget to spend on energy sources.
- Women are emotional and are therefore unfit to be leaders or rational decision makers.
- Women do not have knowledge to represent their households in meetings.
- Women should make important decisions about agriculture production in the community and their household.
- Women should always ask their spouses how to use their money.
- Men are the only one that can inherit wealth.
- Men should decide what to do with the farm income.
- Men should decide which climate mitigation measure to use.
- Women have better knowledge than men about financial services in the community.

# Exercise 4: Social Norms Prioritization

Following on from the ‘Vote with Your Feet’ exercise, after discussion and in agreement with the community, select the social norms from the list which they feel are most important / have the biggest impact on their community, and which they feel need to change.



**Time required:**  
45 minutes



**Materials:**

- flip chart
- paper and pens

**OR**

facilitate a discussion using the questions below.

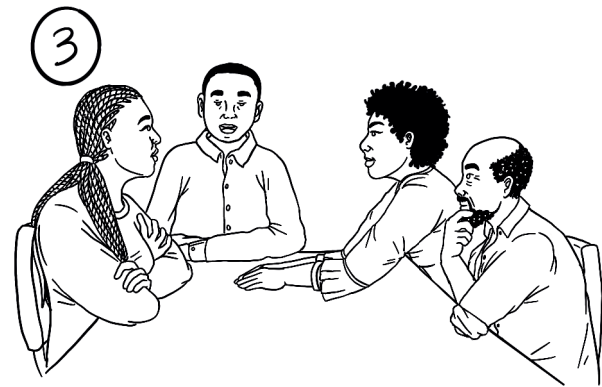
## Steps:



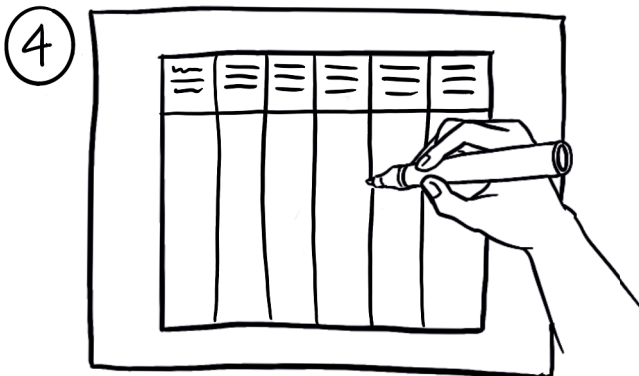
1 Show the list of norms from the previous ‘Vote with Your Feet’ exercise again.



2 Encourage farmers to think about which norms are most relevant to their lives.



3 Explain they will break into groups to discuss different norms.



4 Draw a table like the one on the left and add the titles listed below in the top row:

- **Who is affected by the norm?**
- **Who reinforces the norm?**
- **Impacts of norm (farm)**
- **Impacts of norm (household)**
- **Positive impacts from changing norm?**
- **Actions to change norm**

If you do not have access to a pen and large paper, then just read out the following questions for each norm:

- Who is affected by this norm?
- Who reinforces this norm?
- What are the impacts of this norm at farm level - on farmers and farm workers?
- What are the impacts of this norm at household level?
- What positive changes might arise from changing the norm?
- What steps can we take as individuals and as a group to help change this norm?

