



# Gender Transformative Pathways

*towards  
a Theory of Change  
on gender equality and  
women's empowerment  
in IFAD operations*

THEORY OF CHANGE WORKSHOP

IFAD HQ, ROME, 9 SEPTEMBER 2016

## Why this workshop?

### Context

The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) is conducting a synthesis of evaluation findings on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) in IFAD's operations. The synthesis analyses documented gender results and possible pathways towards gender transformative change using a Theory of Change (ToC). It has prepared a generic ToC which presents the main strategies and practices leading to GEWE transformative change.

### Purpose

The purpose of the half-day workshop was to unpack the generic ToC, identify the key assumptions and factors that enable or hinder transformative change, and develop specific impact pathways within the specific thematic areas where IFAD is engaged, such as:

- Natural resource management, including land and water resources
- Agricultural and livestock production and technologies
- Access to markets, value chain development and enterprise development
- Rural financial services
- Producer organizations and rural institutions

### Expected outcomes

The workshop was expected to generate typical pathways into how transformative change can be more systematically promoted within the thematic areas where IFAD is engaged. This includes a better understanding of the key assumptions that tend to inform the design of interventions, as well as the key factors enabling or hindering achievement of results on GEWE.

# How was it done?

## Content and Methodology

The workshop was jointly organized and delivered by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) and the Policy and Technical Advisory Division (PTA) with the following sessions.

### ✓ Learning about transformative gender practices

PTA (Clare?) presented how transformative IFAD operations can be at design, implementation and completion in terms of promoting gender equality. The level of transformation can be measured with the IFAD gender marker, with six being the highest ranking of gender transformative approaches which go beyond gender mainstreaming (which addresses the symptoms of gender inequality) to challenge and transform the underlying social norms, attitudes, behaviors and social systems which cause gender inequalities.

### ✓ Learning the theory of change framework

IOE presented the framework developed for the evaluation synthesis on GEWE practices. The main goal was to understand the following points: how can GEWE practices be linked to outcomes and longer term changes and impact? What evidence and knowledge do we have about those links? What are the key assumptions and factors that enable or hinder GEWE results and long term transformative changes? Where are the gaps in terms of focus and knowledge?

### ✓ Developing thematic theories of change

Thematic groups were formed and co-facilitated by IOE and PTA lead specialists on natural resource management, agricultural and livestock production and technologies, access to markets, value chain development and enterprise development, rural financial services and producer organizations and rural institutions. The aim was to identify pathways of change in typical IFAD interventions by using a case studies and group discussions.

### ✓ Discussing in plenary and drafting follow up actions

Each thematic group presented the outcomes of their discussions and the pathways for change to the audience. It allowed to identify how each thematic area can lead to sustainable poverty reduction.



## THEMATIC CASE STUDIES

The following case studies were used for mapping out: (i) actions at different levels of engagement (at individual, household, group and/or community level); (ii) short term results and long term changes; (iii) sequences of actions and results, the causal linkages and feedback loops; (iv) supporting actions, contributing factors and assumptions; (v) and gaps in knowledge.

- **Case study 1 on home gardens and crop production**  
Brazil: Rural Development Projects in the Poorest Areas (PPA)
- **Case study 2 on cooperatives/SACCOs and rural finance**  
Uganda: Area-based Agricultural Modernization Programme
- **Case study 3 on land tenure and natural resource management**  
Vietnam :Rural Income Diversification Project in Tuyen Quang Province (RIDP)
- **Case study 4 on technologies and equipment**  
India: Livelihoods Improvement Project in Himalayas
- **Case study 5 on organization/community development**  
Yemen: Al Mahara Rural Development Project (AMRDP), Dhamar Participatory Rural Development Project (DPRDP)
- **Case study 6 on livestock and pastoralism**  
Senegal: Agricultural Development Project in Matam (PRODAM)

The mapping exercise was followed by discussions to identify: (i) actions that have empowered women; (ii) on what aspects (and to what extent) these actions have addressed underlying causes of gender inequality, exclusion and discrimination; (iii) any aspects which have received less attention and any gaps in knowledge.

## MAINSTREAMING YOUTH AND NUTRITION

The plenary session provided also a space to discuss how mainstreaming youth and nutrition can support the transformative pathways to change.



# What were the outputs?

## Outputs and results

### ✓ IFAD has the ability to implement transformative gender practices

Using the gender marker, more than 90% of IFAD operations at design, implementation or completion are rated at 4 and 5. At present, only between 5% and 15% of operations reach the score of 6, the score for gender transformative approaches. Yet this low figure shows the feasibility of reaching the highest level of change in any stage of the IFAD project cycle.

### ✓ Past experiences provide a framework for theory of change

In the ongoing evaluation synthesis on GEWE practices, IOE is preparing a framework on how IFAD is typically creating series of changes for sustainable poverty reduction. The framework first analyses project activities in their contextual factors, barriers and drivers. Secondly, the strategies and interventions on GEWE are identified. Thirdly, results and transformational changes are documented. Finally, key assumptions at every level of change are noted.

### ✓ Six thematic theories of change

This generic framework pre-identified by IOE was applied to the main thematic areas of IFAD's work in agriculture based on country-specific case studies. The exercise was done through thematic working groups co-facilitated by IOE and PTA lead specialists. Six thematic ToCs emerged on: agricultural technology, land tenure, livestock, rural institutions, rural finance and crops. The case studies also helped to identify gaps in IFAD's operations and assumptions.

### ✓ Follow up actions and recommendations

From PTA, the thematic ToCs will be further documented and included as annexes to the upcoming gender and targeting toolkit. From IOE, the case studies provided a framework for analysis and synthesis of evaluation findings on GEWE in IFAD's operations.





# Conclusions

In conclusion, the workshop provided a space for joint evaluation by IOE and PTA on how IFAD is making a difference in terms of GEWE. The joint workshop helped to take stock and learn from past experiences on how IFAD operates and identify the main challenges and gaps preventing gender transformative changes.

**Gender transformative changes** - that go beyond addressing the symptoms of gender inequality to tackling the underlying causes - include

- Changes in awareness, consciousness and confidence
- Improved (and lasting) access to resources and opportunities
- Changes in values, norms and practices
- Enabling policies, laws and institutions

**Possible pathways towards gender transformative change** were identified in the group discussions. At design stage, highlights were on the importance of: demand analysis, participatory assessment of context and needs, budget for gender activities, integration of household methodologies, integration of health/maternal and nutrition issues, gender empowerment interventions (households, groups and communities) and targeted measures for women. During implementation phase, IFAD operations could invest in: validation of gender and targeting strategy with beneficiaries, active participation of women in community planning, gender-sensitive training and technical training for service providers, and choosing technologies with voices of women.

**Specific knowledge** needs to be generated on: women's self-confidence, strengthening of women's power, health, food security and nutrition, gender-based violence, reduction of work load, improved dynamics between men and women – but also on strengths/weaknesses of previous projects. Baseline and initial conditions are known. IFAD develops a clear understanding of what empowerment means.

**Key assumptions** identified for the different intervention themes include that: communities are sufficiently mobilized to raise gender awareness, men are sensitized and fully engaged, mitigation measures are taken to address risks, environmental and contextual dimensions are well addressed, M&E is generating knowledge and gender disaggregated data, policy and enabling frameworks are existing, social and gender perceptions are changing, markets, technologies, business services and infrastructures are accessible, better use of incomes and increased production (such as protein-rich food and household assets).

**Main gaps** were identified in most of case studies including: demand analysis of beneficiaries; identification of women leaders and champions to drive change; interventions to empower women and gender-sensitive activities such as technical trainings without provision of baby care

services; household methodologies not applied impeding improved dynamics between men and women or better distribution of work; reduced gender-based violence; integration of health, food security and nutrition issues to ensure family well-being is improved; availability, knowledge and skills of service providers to deal with gender issues; limited outreach and low performance of beneficiaries; and impact of advocacy and lobbying.

**Impacts.** If all gaps and assumptions are well addressed, impacts on gender equality and women's empowerment will comprise: a recognition of women as agents of change and leaders in agriculture, stereotypes of women in the communities removed; increased food and nutrition security for all household members; a sustainable use of resources with no more gender-based discrimination in their access and control; a change in power relations within local elite, men and women; increased income and savings; improved health, education for children and access to safe water and sanitation; equitable sharing of benefits and economic empowerment of women; sustainable changes in roles and relations; and social capital strengthened.

Gender equality and Sustainable changes in gender roles and relations will be the ultimate goals of a gender transformative pathway. There is public recognition of women. Family well-being has improved with balanced workloads.

*“Gender transformative change and processes of empowerment are ultimately about transforming unequal power relations, the structures and norms (both visible and invisible) that uphold them.”*

## LEARN MORE

Johanna Pennarz  
Lead Evaluation Officer  
[j.pennarz@ifad.org](mailto:j.pennarz@ifad.org)

PTA Gender Desk  
[gender@ifad.org](mailto:gender@ifad.org)

Read the blog post  
<http://ifad-un.blogspot.it/2016/09/stepping-up-gender-agenda-in-ifad10.html>