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Achieving Transformative Change for Rural Women's Empowerment

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1. Introduction

This paper examines obstacles and challenges for policy, practice and research to achieve transformative change in women's status and position in the society that is integral to their economic empowerment. The paper focuses on women working in agriculture and makes three points on how to move forward with this objective: (1) change the way in which gender, gender issues and gender relations are framed, (2) adopt a social relational approach that involves placing women in their wider social setting (including men) even if interventions are designed to empower individual women or groups of women; and (3) broaden the vision of how to achieve or support the sustainable economic empowerment of women beyond locating successful examples of projects or programmes that can be 'upscaled'. The paper does not point to a clear linear process or single pathway or blueprint for achieving this objective, or present a fixed set of criteria for assessing the success of specific interventions. Rather it makes a number of practical recommendations for future actions to be taken at international, national and local levels.

The paper begins with a discussion of standard or conventional framings of women, men and gender relations, especially as these relate to small-scale households or family farming and related decision-making processes. It then uses a selection of feminist literature to question these and associated narratives on the constraints faced by women in their agricultural activities. The paper links these understandings with the way in which the Harvard Framework has been used to treat gender simply as social difference. This is problematic

* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

because it focuses attention on the separate characteristics of women and men rather than on the way that social institutions work together to create and maintain advantages and disadvantages. In contrast, the paper draws attention to the interconnected activities of men and women, and argues that the independent natural resource-based incomes/ resources and roles identified (e.g. through the Harvard Framework) cannot be presumed to take place outside of these relations of interdependence. It also calls for more reflection on the gender identities of men and women, and the investment that various actors have in the way these play out, especially at the level of households. In relation to these points, and considering their implications for development interventions, three conceptual points are highlighted. First, that gender relations are dynamic, with women and men seeking to maintain or change their situations in response to their day-to-day realities in addition to changes at the meso and macro levels. Second, that women and men must be understood as diverse social groupings that encompass multiple identities as spouses, co-workers, parents, siblings and so on. Third, that women and men as household members may have both separate and joint interests while remaining engaged in what is essentially a cooperative enterprise.

The paper then turns to the current call for the identification of successful planned interventions for the economic empowerment of women that are suitable for promoting on a wider scale. Apart from drawing attention to the different understandings of terms such as economic empowerment, good gender practice, gender sensitivity, and gender equity, the paper questions this apparent return to a 'blueprint' approach to women's economic empowerment. The paper ends with a number of practical suggestions for ways forward for development organisations located at different levels and including members of the UN system.

2. The framing of women and men in agriculture and pathways towards economic empowerment

The point of departure is the flurry of activity that began immediately after the publication of Boserup's book in 1970.¹ This activity drew attention to the roles, interests and the asset bases of women and men in agriculture, and linked these to gender relations. The resulting framings and associated narratives that in general conflated gender with women, continue to influence policy, development practice and research. Key elements of these framings and narratives include the ideas that:

- Women undertake the majority of agricultural work in addition to domestic or reproductive work and have limited control over their own labour.
- Women are altruistic, putting their children and household food security first, engaging in food crop production for subsistence using unimproved technology.
- Women's work burdens have increased following the out-migration of men seeking other income earning opportunities, and as access to water and fuel has deteriorated with environmental change.
- Women are risk averse in their economic undertakings and constrained in taking advantage of new opportunities, including new markets in the agricultural sector, by their limited educational background, their poor networks and their mobility restrictions.
- Women lack secure access to land and are unable to provide the collateral that would secure access to credit for their independent agricultural activities. They are also ignored by service providers.
- Women have limited control over the outputs from their labour and therefore lack incentives to increase their production.

Together these paint a picture of rural women working in agriculture as being overburdened, under-rewarded, vulnerable and poor; but equally, although less immediately evident, playing the central role in providing food security and household well-being especially in the absence (in perhaps more ways than one) of husbands and other men.² They also point to a clear intervention pathway for achieving women's economic empowerment.³

These pictures also relate closely to the way in which rural households as small-scale, family-based economic enterprises that include farming but also home-based production and processing, are characterised for much of the developing world. The most conventional household model is based on a stereotypical, functionally discrete, nuclear family unit, consisting of a husband, wife and offspring. Within this unit, women as wives are presented primarily as family workers whose economic interests are congruent with those of their husbands, and whose work is subsumed under his. A variation of this is a model associated largely with sub-Saharan Africa that presents the conjugal relationship as weak, with husbands and wives (and other women and men both young and old) having separate activities, interests, rights, responsibilities and decision-making power, and holding separate purses (i.e. there is little if any resource pooling). These characterisations feature strongly in agricultural policy and practice.⁴ They are modelled as sites of contestation and conflict with women (especially wives) being placed at a considerable disadvantage in relation to their economic activities compared with men.⁵ The following often-repeated statements are rooted in such an understanding of household dynamics in a number of locations:

- Married women are vulnerable to loss of resource access when husbands die, or upon separation or divorce.
- Husbands will reduce their household contributions as the production and/or income of their wives increase.
- Husbands will take over the enterprises of women if they are commercially successful.
- Local and family norms limit women's ability to operate in the public sphere.
- Husbands and men more generally neglect their responsibilities for maintaining household welfare as they increasingly commercialise their agricultural operations, or migrate.

Such household-level dynamics are viewed as constraints to women's ability to intensify their existing production activities and/or to engage in new systems of production, and thus to their economic empowerment.⁶ Since these dynamics point to clear problems in terms of production, household wellbeing, and women's empowerment, they have served as guides to action: they highlight entry points for problem solving, for example through legislation supporting women's resource rights, or through targeted asset/ resource provision (including micro-credit). While these might be regarded as innovative development activities, at the same time, they are not straightforward strategies, especially where resources are valuable and resource access is contested.⁷

Although it can be shown that there are apparent conflicts of interest between household members, and members of other linked institutions, perhaps what is less evident or less reported is that there are also substantial levels of cooperation and shared interests between husbands and wives, and between household members and wider kinship groups. As Jackson argues: 'it is not a good idea to... imagine that preferences and risk behaviour of male household heads can be taken to reflect that of all members within the household, [it is also not a good idea] to separate out women from the context of household relations and suggest they are reliably risk averse and oriented to subsistence and food security in a narrow sense of food production. A husband may be food security personified'.⁸ Equally, there is evidence

that in some circumstances men support women in their call for more resources. Rao (2008), writing of Santal women and men in Dumka District, Jharkhand, India, observes that while in general *Good Women do not Inherit Land* (the title of her book), in some instances, men may support women's land rights. While these men are likely to be secure in their own authority, Rao also notes that customary institutions, at least in this location, even though entirely male dominated, have generally supported women's land claims.⁹

Hence we cannot simply assume that the outcome of any perceived conflict of interest is women losing out in all circumstances. Outcomes such as women taking on additional workloads 'for men'; giving up any existing rights they may have to men such that they appear to lose their ability to fulfil their responsibilities; and husbands and other men not acting to protect or support the needs and interests of their wives and other women, need to be investigated rather than to be taken for granted. In each case this might involve asking a range of questions of different household/ family/ community members. What evidence there is from sub-Saharan Africa (but also from elsewhere) indicates that the demands that husbands can make of wives are not open-ended, that marriage is not simply an institution for the exploitation of women, and 'backgrounding shared interests can underestimate the extent to which women have rational commitments to household arrangements, even though they appear to be gender inequitable'(p.467).¹⁰

As part of any investigation or research into gender relations and gender bargaining for example in the context of agricultural development, it is vital that we are clear about land use/ field systems and the different ways in which both men and women are involved in production, processing and marketing. In much of the gender and agriculture documentation, the discussion of women's roles appears to be largely confined to the work of wives on husband's fields, as unremunerated labour. In fact, both women and men work in various capacities; as independent operators (possibly as household heads or as household members working on their own account), producing for consumption and/ or for sale, or, as workers on the farms or in the enterprise of another (as labour remunerated in kind or cash for a spouse and/or others, or as 'unremunerated' labour).¹¹

While what goes on within households has been a central theme in the women in agriculture literature, decisions taken by household members to change their economic activities will depend partly on what is going on outside households. From her comparison of Bangladeshi women in London and Dhaka, Kabeer concluded that women will not be in a position to either gain any sustainable advantage from participating in new opportunities, or alternatively, to protect themselves as resources become scarcer for example, if the wider social, economic, political and institutional environment is not supportive of any claims they make.¹² Social legitimacy is essential for realising gendered claims, not just legal and policy support.

3. Reframing: Gender planning tools, a social relational approach and including men

In addressing the challenge of changing the way in which rural society is framed, we are drawn to examine the structured and formulaic process of gender analysis¹³ inherent in the gender frameworks – and especially the Harvard Framework – that have been so closely associated with the construction of a particular view of women in agriculture.¹⁴ They are based on, and reinforce orthodox understandings about households as bounded units; about their farming activities, their access to assets, and income control. The resulting comparisons between men and women are understood as 'gender analysis' but provide a static view, one

that privileges women and highlights the nature of their disadvantage, by focusing on time inputs, assets especially land but also credit conditional on land access, and women's caring roles. These comments are not made to suggest that women are not disadvantaged (in households or in other institutional settings). Rather I am supporting an alternative approach that begins by examining the character of households in specific settings, how they operate in terms of income earning and meeting responsibilities, and the implications for individual decision-making and household livelihoods of what are often interlocking projects of individual household members (and even other kinsmen) that extend over time and over a wider range of activities. Such an approach might lead to a different set of questions, different data, and certainly data on men and gender relations (as opposed to simply sex-segregated role data).¹⁵ Such a shift from an analysis that isolates women and men from their social environment, and takes gender roles data as the end point of gender analysis, might also result in the design of more sustainable approaches to addressing disadvantage and thus support a strategy for achieving women's (economic) empowerment.

Although this paper concludes by arguing for more research and analysis along these lines, there is an existing body of detailed analytical research from which emerge more complex and more nuanced understandings of the relations between women and men as spouses, parents, community leaders, farmers and farm labourers, and even of the understanding around asset control, and the value of the assets themselves. Here the dynamic nature of these relations is often highlighted: the term 'nuanced' implies that lessons for intervention or policy are less obvious and straightforward than under the conventional framings.¹⁶

What about crop preferences and understandings about women's interest in household food security? It is not possible to review all this literature here but Guyer, Whitehead and Kabeer, and Jackson have all considered how any such preferences might be explained or understood.¹⁷ Jackson comments that shared interests and shared consumption of collectively produced food are clearly central to rural women's lives. And in response to research findings on the sub-optimal use of agricultural resources by men and women, she also argues that this might make sense when evaluated as the management of complex family relations with positive spin-offs in the enterprise as a whole from which women benefit as members, particularly in relation to food consumption: 'The reason why women (and men?) are able to grow higher value crops on their fields is precisely because other jointly cultivated fields produce staples, that is, separate / independent production by women (and men?) is enabled by joint production, and the boundary between the shared and the separate should not be overdrawn' (p.457). Guyer offers similar explanations: output produced by women must be seen as both a source for their own wealth accumulation as well as a buffer for fluctuations in men's incomes, which are central to household survival. Responsibilities for men and women may also extend beyond the household, to wider families, kin groups and lineages. Fulfilling wider responsibilities has implications for male status, especially where men are household heads and senior members of their kin groups. It also has implications for household status, and women, or wives may see this as beneficial for themselves. Whether or not labour distributions are considered to be fair depends how these fit within all activities and responsibilities for household survival and livelihood growth.¹⁸

I have argued elsewhere that if we are serious about economic empowerment we need to break the link between women on the one hand and small, poor and vulnerable producers with only limited interest in more commercial agricultural activities on the other. In relation to this, and regardless of the explanations detailed above, I would argue that we need to ask the question: How does the social construction of different groups (e.g. women as vulnerable,

responsible for household food security, and without agency or power) affect their opportunities to contribute to and/or benefit from mainstream agricultural policy?¹⁹ The following contributions were provided by two participants in a recent Future Agricultures Consortium gender e-debate that addressed this question:

This construction of women as vulnerable is central to the struggle to identify women as producers within mainstream agricultural policy, such as the USAID *Feed the Future* initiative. Women are most visibly connected to its nutrition and food security objectives, and not its production/ productivity enhancement objectives. Women are often labelled as vulnerable without demonstrating how, in relation to what activities or outcomes, and relative to, as well as in relation to men. More context-specific evidence is needed documenting what women and men do in agriculture and how social and institutional institutions, including the household, impinge on these activities, in order to better define areas of intervention that do more than deliver technical inputs without addressing the wider structural factors influencing whether and how women engage in agriculture. Such evidence also needs to be used to define innovative gender-responsive interventions, and to systematically test different approaches that might improve our understanding of how to scale up successes. (Paula Kantor, ICRW, Washington)

It seems to me the particular contexts within which women are embedded (social, cultural, political) to a large degree work to either limit or expand the space for women to benefit from or contribute to agricultural policy. We need to understand the two “problematiques” (the construction of women as a vulnerable category, and the contexts in which they are located) as dynamically intersecting; and in ways that uniquely shape their experiences. We must understand these intersections for us to gain critical insights into women’s experiences and/or their ability to benefit from or contribute to policy. (Margaret M. Kroma, AGRA)

As already noted, how households and their role in smallholder farming are framed is especially important if we see what happens within households as being central to women’s economic empowerment. Again, from the research literature we see variations in structure and in social relations, in addition to changes in these over time. Critically, these changes are not all in one direction. For example, Jane Guyer points to the complexity of domestic arrangements amongst the matrilineal Akan in Southern Ghana. Her analysis along with that of others clearly demonstrates the need to keep an open mind about changes in these arrangements, and especially about inheritance systems, the power of the elementary family unit and the rights of their individual members over resources, especially land, and about the nature of reciprocity and its implications for economic analysis and decision-making.²⁰ In the case of the Akan, the demise of this matrilineal system has been predicted at least since the 1950s. In terms of learning, rather than seeking the emergence of more familiar (to us) inheritance patterns for example, we might do well to reflect on the survival of these alternative forms, and therefore the value they might have in settings where the supporting infrastructure is inadequate for agricultural investment at this scale. Rather than a dependence on members of a small domestic unit, based on her detailed two-year data set of inputs into cocoa farms in Brong Ahafo Region, Okali demonstrates how men in particular use all their connections – spouses, offspring, kin networks and paid labour – for development of their cocoa farms. In her detailed historical analysis of the structure and functioning of female-headed households in Southern Africa, O’Laughlin draws further lessons about household

forms and domestic arrangements over time in different social, cultural and economic situations.²¹

Although there is a lack of documented experience of working with men on gender, what little information there is makes it very clear that masculine privilege remains unproblematised: Work on men and masculinities in development has not engaged with core equity issues such as equal pay, representation in politics, domestic work etc., and men as problems and women as victims discourse is dominant in the women and development literature.²² Nevertheless, the potential benefits of involving men are many and acting as if men are irrelevant can impose demands on women that are impossible to fulfil. As has already been argued in this paper, women rarely operate as autonomous individuals in their communities, daily lives and even in projects designed for women. In addition, as noted above, in practice it is entirely possible for men to be allies who support women's demands for additional resources. Levy (1992) and Porter, Smyth and Sweetman, (1999) argue that it is necessary to make men more responsible for change.²³ Reflecting on the fact that activities around women have produced a weak, marginalised and often underfunded sector, the authors observe that encouraging men to invest time and energy in changing the gender status quo is likely to be a critical factor in the quest for gender equity (and women's economic empowerment?). In addition, there are challenges such as the negative labelling of men, which fixes them in oppositional sexed categories; the obstacles caused by male hostility to 'women only' projects, and the importance of addressing the male side of joint responsibilities such as sexual health and family nutrition as well as their own caring responsibilities.²⁴

Jackson (2000) in her edited collection of papers on *Labour, Masculinities and Development* suggests that the conventional view of men as having hegemonic power is shifting. She points to evidence that senior men in a number of African societies have experienced a steady erosion of power based on the labour of both junior males and females, as a result of migration, changing marriage laws, and commoditisation. Authors such as Cleaver, Chant, Sweetman, Cornwall and many others referenced in the same volume agree that ongoing changes in the economy, in social structures and in household composition are resulting in 'crises of masculinity' in many parts of the world. The talk is of 'men in crisis', 'troubled masculinities' and 'men at risk', particularly in Latin America and South and Southern Africa; with young males, who have low income levels, being singled out as especially vulnerable to insecurity and marginalisation.²⁵ Evidence for this trend includes: low educational attainment of boys; economic change resulting in the loss of men's assured role as breadwinner and provider to the family; increased entry of women into the labour force, a higher share of female-headed households and the incidence of anti-social behaviour and violence committed by men. Changes such as these are important to both men and women and have implications for the way we envisage both the future of agriculture and women's economic empowerment in specific contexts.

A number of authors note that stating these realities is not to seek sympathy for men, but rather to learn more about how men deal with these realities, the impact on expectations of men and the ability of men to act as full members of society. In relation to reported 'backlash' in circumstances where women are making gains, the question needs to be asked as to whether or not these backlashes stem in large part from men's general anxiety about the fragility of their rural livelihoods and status. Certainly in some cases, backlash, or violence against women, is triggered by pressures on the natural resource base; not as a result of women achieving some advantage over men, but rather as a result of both women and men

finding themselves in competition where previously, before more powerful outsiders appeared, they worked together.²⁶

4. Good practices, successful intervention examples, and scalability

In searching for evidence of ‘good practices’, ‘gender sensitivity’, ‘economic empowerment’, and ‘successful interventions’ we need to begin by reminding ourselves that neither the terms nor the criteria to assess them are straightforward.²⁷ In addition, development organisations vary in the way they define and use the same terms, and the same organisation may change its definition to suit changes in its purpose or strategy. Therefore, projects and processes declared ‘successful’ for achieving a particular goal can and do change rapidly.²⁸

One of the most common criteria used to define project success in the *Women in Agriculture Sourcebook* published by the World Bank in 2009 was women’s participation. However, this term is the subject of a vast literature and its meaning has been debated over two decades. Even if we adopt directly measurable criteria such as the numbers of women attending meetings or income increases over which women have some decision-making power, we are not in a position to conclude that these actions or decisions reflect women’s actual choice, or will result in beneficial outcomes for them. The importance of any specific decisions for women’s sense of autonomy or agency, which are central to the understanding of empowerment, needs to be established rather than taken for granted.

The problem of definitions and criteria increase when we are talking about sustainable change rather than changes in short-term behaviours such as technology adoption. In this case the criteria need to reflect not only shifts in the circumstances of the women themselves (such as increased incomes and autonomy in income use), but also changes in attitudes of those around them (within households, wider family units, and communities), that is the circumstances external to them. Focusing assessment on women themselves is not sufficient for measuring or documenting sustainable change.

All these concerns have implications for the scalability of any specific intervention (are we searching for some universally applicable criteria?), and its value for the development of organisational learning (about how to do projects better). They point to the complexity of social change, and in our search for predictability we need to be clear that seeking precise and predictable outcomes, along with a particular pathway for achieving these, may not be the way forward and may indeed only serve to close the discussion down even before any attempt has been made to learn more. There is no evidence of a single pathway for achieving economic empowerment. In this case, in terms of criteria we might simply be searching for combinations of *programme characteristics*, *targeting strategies*, *contexts* and *opportunities* that are associated with evidence of sustainable change (or indications of positive moves in a desired direction).

In relation to programme characteristics, small intensive livestock systems and milk production have often been noted as ideal income earning activities for women that have also been credited with having economic empowerment potential. The justification given for the interest in these programmes relates to understandings that these activities, when carried out on a small scale, require little land, and that women appear to have substantial rights over the animals and their products. However, in spite of the claims made, the income, autonomy and agency claims have all been challenged and for this author, the jury is still out on whether or

not these particular programmes are likely to result in successful economic empowerment for women.²⁹

In relation to targeting strategies, it cannot be assumed that by focusing on women, agricultural and rural development interventions will result in desired outcomes for them. Everything we know about the organisation of society, and including gender relations, should lead us to question this assumption. This has implications for how we think about social change, what research on gender will look like and how this will be assessed. Does this mean that there is no point in targeting women? On the contrary, targeting for meeting specific practical gender needs appears to be feasible and efficient, and it works. If targeting is done well, that is, if researchers are very clear about the resources involved and the benefits to be expected, this can go a long way to ensure substantial improvements in well-being for rural women and their families.

In terms of contexts (social, economic, political and institutional) that would seem to be supportive of transformative changes of this kind for women, there is little on the ground evidence although at a broad level Kabere's regional gender hierarchies provide a starting point.³⁰

5. Moving forward towards achieving sustainable transformative change for women

The main argument pursued in the first part of this paper is that it is time to move beyond a focus on women as a bounded group if the objective of achieving sustainable transformative change for women is to be achieved. This is not to deny the value of focusing on individuals in certain circumstances, especially when household structures are complex and membership fluctuates. However, even when individual women are the target for interventions, it is necessary to take into account the fact that decisions taken are likely to reflect the decisions/interests and needs of their interdependent others. Similarly the call made for a focus on the relations between women and men – to 'bring men in' – is not simply about repeating the work already done on women, as is suggested by the common responses of disaggregation (that focuses on the separate characteristics of men and women), and simplistic dualisms starting with roles, access and control comparisons between men and women, and that readily leads to interventions designed to 'close the gaps'. Rather the call points to the need to:

- resist framing the rural population as a collection of isolated, atomised individuals with only individual and separate interests, and place them within their wider social contexts of gender, age, class and other identities that influence their relations with others;
- remember that gender relations are not always fraught and cannot be read off from sex differentiated data;
- focus on identifying how women and men experience and value ongoing changes and use this to both meet their own interests while addressing concerns about short and long term household survival;
- focus on processes of change, identifying the circumstances which allow structures to limit or support access to opportunities, and learning more about the kinds of support both women and men will need if they are to benefit from or adapt to change (in policy, technology, markets, climate etc);
- avoid privileging an individualistic and production-oriented view of development over a relational and well-being oriented one.

These principles should lead to a different set of research and policy questions that reflect the specifics of particular locations and situations of different categories of rural women, in

addition to taking into account the fact that they are active social agents, not simply poor beneficiaries who need help.

At one level this is a call for ‘scaling down’ of policy. At another level it is a call for policy to be more explicitly framed by an understanding of the wider social relations within which individuals take decisions, manoeuvre for change and seek support. This paper argues that all this is necessary if the implications of gender disadvantage for women’s empowerment are to be taken seriously. In relation to where these proposals fit into the four decades of work on women in development, approaches to women’s empowerment in relation to agriculture have focused substantially on the provision of women-focused micro-credit, securing their *de-jure* rights especially in relation to land, and placing gender mainstreaming in all programmes and projects. None or very little of this work has seriously attempted to strengthen the decision-making role of women, or addressed attitudes and beliefs at the level of households, community, and beyond as called for in the collection of papers by Kate Young and others published 30 years ago.³¹ The same story is repeated for gender and agriculture research within the international research system of the CGIAR. After 15 years of participatory and gender research, impact assessments have concluded that the participation of potential technology clients was the main focus of the research while gender analysis followed principles of gender disaggregation and ended there. However, at least one of the new CGIAR ‘mega-programs’ (the CRPs) incorporates a plan to undertake specific research on gender norms and roles and their relevance for achieving women’s empowerment.

The second part of this paper turned to the concern of scalability of successful interventions to support the economic empowerment of rural women in the context of agricultural development, and in an environment where women’s economic empowerment is associated with smart economics and instrumentalism (what might be referred to as obstacles and challenges).³² In addition to the operating principles referred to above that call for a more sophisticated and analytical gender analysis and greater attention to ongoing change in specific contexts, it points to issues with which many of us are no doubt familiar: ‘fuzzy’ definitions, assessment criteria beyond income increases, the complexity of assessing autonomy of decision-making, singular notions of progress and pathways for reaching this, and the need to address structures of disempowerment if sustainable change is the objective. The main concern of the brief discussion in this second part is about the meaning of scalability. What is to be scaled up? Are we talking about underlying principles, or seeking more insight/ potential knowledge that has implications for impact pathways? In this sense we would be talking about scaling up of learning.

In terms of who can do what, organisations at different levels each have roles to play. UN agencies and other macro-level organisations have a key role to play in changing the way in which women are portrayed, narratives about gender relations, and even more basic understandings about who does what (that has been made central to planning). This may be one of the biggest challenges given the way in which this information has been used to date to promote a feminist agenda. However, a shift is already evident in the 2010 FAO SOFA. Meso-level organisations have a similar role to play but in addition they need to build capacity in the gender analysis that goes beyond comparisons between men and women on roles played and assets owned. What little information there is suggests that agricultural research organisations at this level need to incorporate a gender relations understanding within their participatory strategies, and to contribute insights into the understanding of the role of spouses and others in individual decision-making on say technical change. In terms of highlighting change pathways for achieving women’s economic empowerment, there are

gaps in information, especially about supportive environments for change. A starting point for this work would be to identify existing formal and informal institutions that enable women's agency, voice, claims and opportunities.

Endnotes

¹ Boserup, E. 1970. *Women's Role in Economic Development*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

² This understanding of women being key to achieving food security in the developing world remains very strong, and dominates much of the discussion about women in agriculture. See for example IFPRI. 2002. *Sustainable Food Security for All by 2020*. Proceedings of International Conference, Bonn, Germany (4–6 September 2001): online at <http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/books/2020conpro.htm#153> and Quisumbing A R, Meinzen-Dick, R.S. & Smith, L.C. 2004. *Increasing the Effective Participation of Women in Food and Nutrition Security in Africa*. Africa Conference Brief 4. Washington: International Food Policy Research Institute.

³ These statements appear throughout the *Women in Agriculture Sourcebook* produced by the World Bank (WB), The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). 2009. This 800 page volume covers all agricultural sectors and includes special sections on food security, finance, land, governance and climate change.

⁴ All this is well documented in the social science literature. See for example Moock, J. L. (Ed) 1986. *Understanding Africa's Rural Households and Farming Systems*, Boulder and London: Westview Press, and especially the article by Guyer, J. I. 'Intra-Household Processes and Farming Systems Research: Perspectives from Anthropology': 92-104; Hart, G. 1997. "'Rotten Wives" to "Good Mothers". Household Models and the Limits of Economism', *IDS Bulletin*, 28(3):14-25; Chiappori, P-A., Haddad L., Hoddinott, J. & Kanbur, R. 1993. 'Unitary versus Collective Models of the Household. Time to Shift the Burden of Proof?' *Policy Research Working Paper 1217*, Ghana: The World Bank; Oppong, C. 1994. 'Introduction' in *Gender, Work & Population in Sub-Saharan Africa* edited by Adepoju, A. & Oppong, C., London: James Currey.

⁵ Jackson, C. 2000. 'Men at Work', *The European Journal of Development Research*, 12(2):1-22.

⁶ The fact that men are likely to take over women's commercially successful livestock enterprises has also been reported by Hill, C. 2003. *The Tanzanian Experience in Different Livestock Production Systems. A Glance at LinKs*. LinKs Project Case Study. C. Okali (2010) in her *Notes on Livestock, Food Security and Gender Equity* in the AGA Working Paper Series, Rome, FAO, points to reports of men attempting to benefit from the grade cattle that had been registered in the names of women in Tanzania, and in India, in spite of the positive publicity of women's engagement in the White (milk) Revolution, in the same document we also read that men have been resisting women's membership in village milk cooperatives.

⁷ WB/FAO/IFAD. 2009. 'Gender in Fisheries and Aquaculture', Module 13 of the *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook*, Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development: 561-306.

⁸ Jackson, C. 2007. 'Resolving Risk? Marriage and Creative Conjuality.' *Development and Change*, 38(1):107-129; Kasante, D., Lockwood, M., Vivian, J. & Whitehead, A. 2002. 'Gender and the Expansion of Nontraditional Exports in Uganda' in *Shifting Burdens: Gender and Agrarian Change under Neoliberalism* edited by Razavi, S. Kumarian Press: Bloomfield CT: 35-66.

⁹ Rao, Nitya. 2008. *Good Women do not Inherit Land: Politics of Land and Gender in India*, Social Science Press and Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, India.

¹⁰ Jackson C. 2007

¹¹ Whitehead, A. 1994. 'Wives & Mothers: Female Farmers in Africa', in Adepoju, A. & Oppong, C. (eds.):35-53.

¹² Kabeer, N. 2000. *The Power to Choose: Bangladeshi Women and Labour Market Decisions in London and Dhaka*, London/ New York: VERSO.

¹³ There is no precise definition of gender analysis. A casual look at the literature reveals a range of analyses from detailed country studies providing a national gender profile to comparative statistics showing the different roles, assets and decision-making power of women and men, and detailed analyses of bargaining and exchange between women and men in households. The analyses may refer only to women or include the relationships between women and men in their different identities, all of which have implications for change. Central to many gender analyses are gender analytical tools and frameworks.

¹⁴ For a discussion of the frameworks and a practical guide to their use see: March, C., Smith, I. & Mukhopadhyay, M. 1999. *A Guide to Gender Analysis Frameworks*, Oxford: Oxfam. And for a perspective on the way in which they are used in gender analysis see Locke, C. & Okali, C. 1999. 'Analysing Changing Gender Relations: Methodological Challenges for Gender Planning', *Development in Practice*, 9(3): 274-286. For an analysis of the close link between the Harvard Framework and livelihood approaches see Okali, C. 2006.

Linking Livelihoods and Gender Analysis for Achieving Gender Transformative Change, FAO Working Paper, Livelihoods Support Programme (LSP), Access to Natural Resources Sub-Programme, Rome, Food and Agriculture Organisation

¹⁵ See Leach, M., Scoones, I. & Stirling, I. 2010. *Dynamic Sustainabilities: Technology, Environment, Social Justice*, London: Earthscan, for changing analysis from one that closes down discussions and new learning to one that potentially results in new learning based on alternative approaches and asking different research questions.

¹⁶ This point is made and discussed in Okali, C. 2011. *Integrating Social Difference, Gender and Social Analysis into Agricultural Development*, FAC Policy Brief 039, IDS, Sussex.

¹⁷ Guyer, J. I. 1986; Whitehead A and N. Kabeer, 2001. 'Living with Uncertainty: Gender, Livelihoods and Pro-Poor Growth in Rural sub-Saharan Africa', *Working Paper 134*, IDS, Sussex; Jackson, C. 2003. 'Gender Analysis of Land: Beyond Land Rights for Women?' *Journal of Agrarian Change* 3(4): 453–80.

¹⁸ Jackson, C. 2000.

¹⁹ For more discussion on this refer to Okali, C. 2010. *Searching for New Pathways towards Achieving Gender Equity: Beyond Boserup and 'Women's Role in Economic Development*, ESA Working Paper, 11-09, Rome, Food and Agriculture Organisation, and FAC e-debate addressing the question, 'Why integrate the analysis of social relations into agricultural policy?' June 2011, Future Agricultures Consortium, IDS, Sussex.

²⁰ Guyer, J. I. 1986; Hill, P. 1963. *The Migrant Cocoa Farmers of Southern Ghana; A Study in Rural Capitalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Oppong, C. 1970. *Aspects of Conjugal Relationships among Akan Senior Civil Servants in Accra*, Cambridge, PhD Thesis; Okali, C. 1983. *Cocoa and Kinship in Ghana: the Matrilineal Akan of Ghana*. London: Kegan Paul for the International African Institute; Berry, S. 2009. 'Building for the Future? Investment, Land Reform and the Contingencies of Ownership in Contemporary Ghana', *World Development*, 37(8): 1370-1378.

²¹ O'Laughlin, B. 1998. 'Missing men? The Debate over Rural Poverty and Women-Headed Households in Southern Africa', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 25(2):1-48.

²² See the report on a symposium held in Senegal in 2007: *Politicising Masculinities: Beyond the Personal* by Esplen, E. & Greig, A, 2008: 3-4.

²³ Levy, C. 1992. 'Gender and the Environment: The Challenge of Cross-cutting Issues in Development Policy and Planning'. *Environment and Urbanization*, 4(1): 134–149; Porter, F., Smyth, I. & Sweetman, C. 1999. Introduction in Porter, F. Smyth, I. & Sweetman, C. (eds.) *Gender Works*, Oxfam Experience in Policy and Practice, Oxford: Oxfam: 1-13.

²⁴ Cornwall, A. & White, S.C. 2000. 'Men, Masculinities and Development: Politics, Policy and Practice', *IDS Bulletin*, 31(2): 1-6; Esplen, E. & Greig, A. 2008. Symposium report on *Politicising Masculinities: Beyond the Personal*.

²⁵ Barker, G. 1997. *Emerging Global Trends Related to the Role of Men and Families*. Briefing Notes for a Brown Bag Discussion organised by the Chapin Hill Center for Children at the University of Chicago (referenced in Chant, Sylvia 1999. 'Households, Gender and Rural-Urban Migration: Reflections on Linkages and Considerations for Policy', in *Women, Globalisation and Fragmentation in the Developing World* edited by Haleh Afshar and Stephanie Barrientos. Basingstoke: Macmillan:91-130.); Cornwall, A. 1998. 'Gender, Participation and the Politics of Difference' in Guijt I. & Shah, M.K.(eds.) *The Myth of Community: Gender Issues in Participatory Development*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications:46-57.

²⁶ This comment is taken from the case of inland lake fisheries covered in a fisheries policy document: FAO Fisheries Division: 2005/6 SFLP (Small-Scale Fisheries Programme in West Africa) 'Gender Policies for Responsible Fisheries' Policy Brief No 6. Rome, Food and Agriculture Organisation.

²⁷ From a detailed analysis of a range of agricultural programmes, Sumberg, J., Irving, R. Adams, E. & Thompson, J. (2012) argue that success has no objective meaning and claims of success do not arise through an objective process of evaluating results, outcomes or impacts. Rather, success is what the success maker says it is, what he or she can make stick. Success stories are an integral element of success making (*Success Making and Success Stories: Agronomic Research in the Spotlight*, in: Sumberg, J. & Thompson, J. (eds.), *Contested Agronomy: Agricultural Research in a Changing World*. Earthscan, London).

²⁸ Mosse, D. 2005. *Cultivating Development: An Ethnology of Aid Policy and Practice*, London, Pluto Press.

²⁹ See the arguments made in Okali, C. 2009. *Engaging Women as Partners in the Livestock Revolution*. FAO Livestock Paper AGA and ESW, Rome: Food and Agriculture Organisation, and in Sumberg & Lankoandé 2011 on the Heifer-in-Trust livestock programmes.

³⁰ Kabeer, N. 1994. *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*, London and New York: VERSO.

³¹ Young, K, Wolkowitz, C. & McCullagh, R. (eds.) 1981. *Of Marriage and the Market: Women's Subordination Internationally and its Lessons*. London: CES.

³² Eyben, R. & Napier-Moore, R. 2009.