



The Role of Farmers' Organizations in Empowering Rural Women and Promoting Rural Women's Leadership

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Outline of presentation

- The need for collective action
- The roles FOs play
- Women members' situation in mixed FOs
- How FOs can promote rural women's leadership
- Recommendations



The need for collective action

- The problem : decades of neglect, mis- and underinvestment in small-holder agriculture
- The result : growing poverty and hunger in farming communities
- Farmers' response : sector organizing; commodity organizing at all levels



A working definition of FOs

- Membership –based, first party organizations (we exist to serve our own interests)
- Formal/ informal
- Organized at different levels



The roles FOs play

- Political empowerment
 - influencing, shaping policies and programs
 - representation in consultative and decision making bodies
- Economic empowerment
 - access and control over assets and resources :
natural , production, marketing, information - to get fairer, higher incomes, more participation in value chains



Women's situation in mixed FOs

- Comprises 30-50% of membership
- Small number of women in leadership positions
- Women confined to local level activities

Therefore :

- Women have less voice and decision-making over the affairs of the FO; benefits not much felt by women farmers



How Fos can promote women's leadership

- Quota for women's participation
- Establish own space and platform
- Conduct gender sensitivity sessions
- -women first
-then men
-then both men and women
- Build and strengthen leadership of women and men supporting gender equality



How Fos can promote women leadership

- Respond to both practical and strategic gender needs
- Mainstream gender in all policies and programs, culture of the FOs
- Conduct capacity building and training programs that put women farmers at the center.



Initiative- Farmer and Nature Net (Cambodia)





Initiative – Women Advanced Farmers' Federation (Republic of Korea)





Initiative: PAKISAMA





Requirements

- Community organizers/ facilitators/animations
- Technical expertise
- Financial resources
- Favorable policy environment



Recommendations

- Support and involve FOs in the planning, designing , and implementation of agricultural and rural policies and programs through institutionalized processes
- Enact appropriate legislation and regulatory frameworks for FOs to enjoy the rights and freedom to operate independently
- Support capacity building of FOs in a sustained manner
- Proactively involve FOs in agricultural research and extension