

Independent Office  
of Evaluation



## What works for gender equality and women's empowerment - a review of practices and results

EVALUATION SYNTHESIS





**Independent Office  
of Evaluation**



**IFAD**

Investing in rural people

## **What works for gender equality and women's empowerment – a review of practices and results**

### **Evaluation synthesis**

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## **Foreword**

*The Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) has prepared an evaluation synthesis report on gender equality and women's empowerment. The report provides a systematic review of gender practices and results that have been documented in IOE evaluations since 2011. The focus on gender practices and results on the ground was intended to complement the mid-term review of IFAD's policy on gender equality and women's empowerment, also conducted in 2016, which assessed IFAD's gender architecture and the mechanisms for gender mainstreaming throughout the organization.*

*The report is timely as IFAD has committed to improve its performance on gender during the period of the Tenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources, and in particular to sharpen its focus on gender-transformative practices and results. The report provides a conceptual framework in the form of a theory of change that can be used to identify different types of practices and how they contribute to transformative processes. A theory of change appropriately captures the nature of transformative change, for which results often take time to emerge. Thus, evaluations that typically take place sometime after project completion are in a position to assess whether gender norms, roles and relations have indeed been transformed.*

*The review found that in many cases IFAD has supported transformative change by addressing root causes of gender inequality and women's powerlessness, in particular their exclusion from access to resources and opportunities and their limited social capital. But the report also highlights that policy engagement on gender, although a critical element to support transformative change, has not yet received sufficient attention.*

*The report contains a wealth of lessons and good practices. One important lesson is that transformation needs to be built into the design of projects. Interventions that had a clear transformative purpose were found to be more effective. This can include activities aiming to break traditional gender roles and stereotypes, but also strategies for social mobilization and leadership. Strategic alliances that include gender champions and agents of change, and networks between women's groups and activities, are important and should be more systematically pursued.*

*The report concludes that there is no agreed definition of transformative change in IFAD, nor has the concept been operationalized in IFAD's work on gender yet. The definition of gender-transformative practices should be based on the unique experiences that IFAD has in rural development and agriculture. However, as the review has pointed out, gender practices and their results are not sufficiently documented and reviewed, which results in limited opportunities for organizational learning. The report has taken an important step in this direction by documenting the lessons and practical case studies from this review.*

*The recommendations from this report emphasize the need for IFAD to sharpen its understanding of and practices on gender throughout the programming cycle, from design to evaluation, for greater focus on gender-transformative results.*

*I hope that this report's findings, lessons and recommendations, as well as the good practices documented, will be useful for stepping up IFAD's work on gender, in line with its commitments under the Tenth Replenishment period and as an important contribution to the global Agenda 2030.*



Oscar A. Garcia  
Director

Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
APR	Asia and the Pacific region
CGIAR	Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research
CLE	corporate-level evaluation
CPE	country programme evaluation
DfID	Department for International Development
ECG	Evaluation Cooperation Group
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ESA	East and Southern Africa region
ESR	evaluation synthesis report
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GPoA	Gender Plan of Action
GEWE	gender equality and women's empowerment
IGA	income-generating activity
IOE	Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean region
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NEN	Near, North Africa and Europe region
PCRv	project completion report validation
PPA	project performance assessment
PTA	Policy and Technical Advisory Division (IFAD)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SKD	Strategy and Knowledge Department (IFAD)
ToC	theory of change
UN-SWAP	United Nations System-wide Action Plan
WCA	West and Central Africa region
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WFP	World Food Programme



# Executive summary

## Background

1. This evaluation synthesis report on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) practices and results was produced by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE). Its main purpose is to support learning on what GEWE practices work and under what conditions, and to identify transformative GEWE practices that should be further promoted and scaled up in the future.
2. For the Tenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD10) period, IFAD has committed to improve its performance on gender practices, in particular the share of GEWE interventions aiming at transformative change. There is no agreed definition of 'transformative' within IFAD yet. For the purpose of this evaluation, we define transformative approaches as those that aim to overcome the root causes of inequality and discrimination through promoting sustainable, inclusive and far-reaching social change. Transformative approaches challenge existing social norms and the distribution of power and resources.
3. The synthesis reviews the operational part of IFAD's programme and, within this, programme and project-level interventions that addressed issues of GEWE within the context of the agricultural sector and rural development since 2011. The systematic review of evaluation findings draws from a sample of 57 IOE reports.
4. The synthesis provides a conceptual framework for identifying practices that have delivered GEWE results, in particular those that are transformative and thus relevant in the context of the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The conceptual framework for this synthesis is captured in a theory of change, presenting pathways towards GEWE.

## Main findings

5. Within the sample of 57 evaluations, the synthesis identified 121 GEWE practices, classified into four main types. Most common are practices to improve access to resources, services and opportunities (39 per cent). This is followed by practices to strengthen women's and men's awareness, consciousness and confidence (25 per cent) and practices that address political, legal and institutional constraints to GEWE (24 per cent). Practices to reduce women's time poverty are less common (12 per cent).
6. **Relevance.** The review found that guidance by IFAD's Gender Plan of Action and the IFAD Policy on gender equality and women's empowerment was important in ensuring that interventions were relevant and addressed key GEWE issues. IFAD's attention to key constraints highlighted by global gender indices, such as lack of access to rural financial services, time poverty and exclusion from group participation is highly relevant, also in the context of Agenda 2030. The interventions reviewed were generally in line with IFAD GEWE policy objectives, although the objective of balancing workloads was insufficiently addressed.
7. In terms of aligning interventions with women's priorities, the main assumption underlying most targeting strategies was that women are able to benefit through a participatory planning and implementation approach. To some extent, participatory processes are instrumental in addressing women's needs, and women often do benefit proportionally, even when not targeted. Nevertheless, explicit consideration of women's needs is important and specific targeting strategies are relevant. There is also scope to better address the diversity of women (ethnic, religious, life cycle) and their needs, and to ensure that generally-held beliefs about gender and women are critically assessed.
8. **Effectiveness.** IFAD-supported interventions include a range of practices to improve women's access to economic resources and opportunities, often used in

combination for effective results. Rural finance is the most common practice, but the evidence shows that the contribution of rural finance interventions to GEWE was mixed. Many projects report large numbers of women beneficiaries, but often this was the result of self-targeting or other factors, rather than deliberate targeting strategies. Financial services that worked with providers specifically serving women were more gender-inclusive.

9. Similarly the provision of general infrastructure, which has helped to improve women's lives in many cases, but needs to be combined with other practices to make an effective contribution to GEWE. Functional skills training is also common and widely reported as useful. Yet some evaluations raised concerns that the types of training provided tended to confirm traditional gender roles and stereotypes and were not sufficiently oriented to women's strategic needs.
10. Interventions enabling women to take up a role in value chains and marketing can make a significant contribution to GEWE. Backyard and home gardens can help enhance women's role in household food production and income generation, but were found less transformative. Positive examples of promoting women's income-generating activities (IGAs) were still rare in the sample reviewed. Practices addressing women's time poverty were generally found effective, but they need to be more widely applied.
11. Projects that used a highly participatory approach to community development were effective in achieving gender-inclusive results. They reached out to a large number of women and successfully mobilized them for community affairs. There are, however, no gender-transformative outcomes documented. Some evaluations have argued that community-driven approaches may generate substantial benefits for both genders, but are unlikely to transform traditional gender roles if they build on existing power relations, rather than challenging them. Challenging existing power relations requires additional strategies, for example facilitation through external change agents. Practices aiming to break gender roles and stereotypes and working with men were found to be highly effective. Practices to engage with policy makers on GEWE at national and local levels are still few and more attention is needed to building networks and alliances on GEWE beyond the local level.
12. **Impact.** IFAD has addressed root causes of gender inequality and women's powerlessness, in particular illiteracy, exclusion from access to resources and limited social capital. This is linked to the nature of IFAD-supported projects, which emphasize participatory approaches and community capacity-building, including group formation and functional skills training. These had a clear impact on women's self-esteem, status and recognition, and in a number of cases challenged gender roles and power relations, although the latter is not well-documented. Measures to protect women from violence have enabled them to claim public spaces, such as markets, which in some cases was among the enabling factors transforming women's lives. Social mobilization and strengthened leadership has helped women to also claim political spaces. Reducing drudgery and challenging gender norms have led to transformational changes in secluded and marginalized communities.
13. The most significant changes identified in the synthesis sample were enhanced women's confidence and self-esteem, literacy and functional skills and social capital. Some changes were also observed on cultural norms and practices, but they require further evidence and more systematic monitoring. Very few examples of formal systemic change were documented, for example on laws, policies and government capacities.
14. **Transformative practices.** The synthesis found a number of practices that, in combination with other more conventional interventions, led to transformative changes. Reducing drudgery and challenging gender norms have led to

transformational changes in secluded and marginalized communities, where in particular the provision of water as a common good had a catalytic effect.

15. Interventions that have a clear transformative purpose were found to be more effective for GEWE. An important transformative purpose is to break traditional gender roles and stereotypes through activities that can range from training, income generation or marketing, to participation in decision-making. This can also be part of social mobilization and leadership strategies.
16. The same benchmarks on transformative change cannot be applied in settings with very restrictive gender norms. In those most secluded and marginalized communities, even the provision of basic infrastructure triggered some transformative changes. In particular, the provision of domestic water has transformed community relations, including gender relations, in communities that were very conservative and where previously women had not been involved in public life. The projects specifically targeted women to get them involved in community affairs.
17. Although some practices may be more transformative than others, it is ultimately the combination of practices that brings about change. The synthesis therefore concludes that it is the use of multiple and complementary gender practices that facilitate changes in gender roles and relations. For example, practices to improve women's access to resources and opportunities in combination with practices to enhance women's and men's awareness and consciousness were found to be very effective.
18. Policy engagement on GEWE has not yet received sufficient attention and support, but it is an important element of a transformative approach. Important legal and policy constraints can be effectively addressed through engagement with government and women's organizations or networks at local and national level, building on good GEWE practices on the ground.
19. Building strategic networks and alliances on GEWE has proved successful in some cases, but was not systematically pursued. Powerful change agents for transformative approaches can be government partners or national agencies, if they are sufficiently sensitized. In many cases, microfinance institutions, cooperatives, NGOs, economic interest groups, indigenous organizations or district assemblies have been change agents. Also the sensitization of men and traditional leaders and making them change agents themselves has proved successful. Gender focal points are often seen as important change agents, although often they may not have been sufficiently empowered themselves to facilitate broader changes.
20. **Contributing factors.** The socio-economic and policy context matters and it is often insufficiently understood and addressed. Important drivers of discrimination and exclusion, for example customary land rights excluding women, are often not addressed. Effective change can be hindered by overly complex project designs, lack of gender expertise within project management, and insufficient budget allocations for gender-related activities. Issues that are often insufficiently understood and addressed include the socio-economic consequences of outmigration and how these and other factors affect women's workloads.
21. **Sustainability.** Practices are more likely to be sustained if the benefits they generate are well received, for example in the cases of backyard gardens, drudgery reducing technologies, or widely recognized, as in the case of awards used to acknowledge successful women entrepreneurs. Participatory approaches enhance ownership and they help to ground gender in community structures. Integration of gender practices in local and national institutions is important, for example linking women's credit groups to the formal banking sector. Illiteracy is a factor that negatively affects the sustainability of women's groups and platforms.

22. **Lessons learned.** The synthesis has reviewed the gendered poverty impacts of common practices used by IFAD and others in the context of rural and agricultural development. There are a number of practices, such as rural finance, land and legal rights, markets and value chains, and off-farm employment, that can potentially make a significant contribution to addressing female poverty and IFAD is encouraged to review relevant good practices. Addressing issues of multiple exclusion and monitoring and reporting equal benefits for different groups of women is an area that requires more attention. The report summarizes the 14 key lessons from this synthesis in chapter VIII.

## Conclusions

23. IFAD has embarked on a new transformative agenda on GEWE. It has set itself ambitious targets to achieve real transformative gender impacts by addressing the root causes of gender inequalities through investments and policy engagement. At the moment there is no clear agreed definition or operationalization of the gender-transformative concept, in IFAD or elsewhere. The focus of this synthesis was therefore to systematically review the available evidence on gender practices and results with the aim of identifying transformative practices, as well as the key factors enabling or hindering GEWE in the context of IFAD interventions.
24. The review found that in many cases IFAD has addressed the root causes of gender inequality and women's powerlessness, in particular illiteracy, exclusion from access to resources and limited social capital. Participatory approaches and capacity-building, including group formation and functional skills training, had a clear impact on women's self-esteem, status and recognition, and in a number of cases challenged gender roles and power relations.
25. Most of the changes supported by IFAD interventions were at the individual level. They have successfully empowered women by providing access to resources or helping them acquire new skills, for example. Yet transformation requires change beyond individual capabilities. The review identified some interventions that successfully contributed to changing cultural norms and practices, but those rather intangible changes are often not well-documented and monitored. There were only very few examples where IFAD interventions enabled formal systemic change, for example on laws, policies and government capacities, and this is where a major gap exists at the moment.
26. Project design has not always been explicit and intentional about the choices to approach GEWE. There is no doubt that IFAD interventions have created significant benefits for women. The provision of general infrastructure and in particular water has important gendered aspects and can address some root causes of gender inequality, such as time poverty. But these benefits must be intentionally built into the design and they must be consistently followed up and monitored. Furthermore, sustainable access to resources, in particular land, often also requires changes in laws and administrative practices that need to be considered at design.
27. Practices were not sufficiently documented to enable learning. For example, project documentation could be more explicit about definitions and meanings of empowerment, how this is assessed, and what results the project achieves – both in terms of empowering women and the broader positive impact this has. The analysis of gender inequalities and how projects are able to impact on these could be improved. The identification of good practices is not straightforward though since most interventions work with a combination of practices and are highly contextualized.
28. Measuring transformative change is an inherently complex and holistic endeavour and gender-transformative measurement systems must be equipped to embrace complexity and context-specificity, as well as the halting and often unpredictable nature of social change. There is a wealth of promising processes and practices for measuring meaningful relational change, social norm change or change in the less

tangible aspects of recognition. Standard Results and Impact Management System (RIMS) indicators are not sufficient to capture those changes. Project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) thus will need to be more creative and include more diverse methods to capture social change.

## Recommendations

29. **Recommendation 1. Conceptualize and integrate the gender-transformative approach for use throughout the organization for IFAD10.** IFAD has set itself ambitious targets on gender-transformative interventions under IFAD10. It is therefore important to develop a shared understanding of the concept throughout the organization if gender-transformative practices are to be promoted and monitored in a consistent manner. The shared understanding of the concept will also underpin the highly satisfactory (6) transformative ratings at project design and closure that will feed into reporting under IFAD10. Harmonization of ratings approaches should also involve IOE.
30. **Recommendation 2. Develop explicit theories of change to underpin targeting strategies for different groups of women, together with indicators to monitor them at the point of design, and offer tailored interventions based on available good practices.** Theories of change are critical to linking design, implementation and monitoring of gendered targeting strategies. Specific targeting strategies are required to address the needs of different groups of women, that are more likely to be left behind, such as very poor women, landless women, single women, female-headed households, indigenous women and young women, together with good contextual analysis. Relying on a participatory approach will not be sufficient, rather explicit strategies have to be integrated into design and followed through during implementation, based on good gender analysis. The effectiveness of targeting will require further disaggregation of beneficiary data for monitoring purposes.
31. **Recommendation 3. Establish systematic M&E of disaggregated benefits and GEWE outcomes at corporate and project levels.** The revision of the RIMS framework provides an opportunity to improve gender-disaggregated performance indicators at output and outcome level. While some key performance indicators should be set at corporate level (e.g. indigenous women, young women), the main effort will be to improve the granularity (and quality) of indicators and data at project level. At the same time, projects should improve the documentation of GEWE results, in particular GEWE outcomes and impacts, using appropriate methodologies for measuring gender-transformative changes within a given context, such as case studies and participatory and qualitative research to complement standard M&E data.
32. **Recommendation 4. Report consistently on GEWE outcomes and impacts in GEWE evaluations and include sound contextual analysis to explain results (IOE).** Evaluation methods should place more emphasis on capturing GEWE results beyond beneficiary numbers and outputs, and should allow space for sufficient analysis of the contextual factors that have shaped those results. The adoption of a theory of change approach in IOE evaluations provides opportunities to integrate gendered results and assumptions. Beyond this, good gender or social analysis in evaluation also means that the required expertise must be available in every evaluation team.
33. **Recommendation 5. Replicate good practices covering the three GEWE policy objectives and strengthen working with men.** The synthesis has identified a number of practices that are relevant for promoting GEWE objectives. The report showed that some practices are more common than others; some practices have shown good results while others need to be improved to become effective. The critical review and validation of practices at corporate and project

level is part of the process of replication and scaling up. The process of reviewing both success and failure will have to continue beyond this report.

34. Based on this synthesis, we have identified the following guiding principles:

- (a) Practices that worked well, but are not yet common, should be promoted (e.g. value chains, marketing, off-farm employment).
- (b) Labour-saving technologies and working with men are not common practices yet, but the available evidence suggests that they can be highly effective. Practices to influence men and traditional leaders and practices to address women's time poverty should be widely integrated into IFAD's interventions.
- (c) Practices that are common, but so far have yielded mixed results, should be improved based on the available international practices. IFAD should critically review some commonly held beliefs and assumptions about gendered benefits and promote services that are better tailored to the strategic needs of women (e.g. inclusive rural finance, infrastructure, functional skills training).
- (d) Some practices are highly relevant, but not yet effective or common (e.g. promotion of IGAs, land rights), often because they are meeting contextual limitations (social and cultural values, institutional and legal frameworks). For those, the assumptions and influencing factors (in their theories of change) that have been limiting their effectiveness and wider application need to be carefully reviewed. The wider application of those practices needs to be accompanied with adequate strategies to address the systemic issues that may limit their effectiveness.
- (e) Policy engagement and scaling up successful GEWE practices are key to enabling transformative change. There are some good practices already, but they need to be more widely understood and applied within IFAD.
- (f) Finally, it is the combination of practices that brings about transformative change. Therefore, IFAD interventions should be encouraged to use a range of different practices that more comprehensively address the complexity of issues and factors affecting GEWE.



## IFAD Management's response<sup>1</sup>

### Overall

1. Management welcomes IOE's evaluation synthesis report (ESR) on "What works for gender equality and women's empowerment – a review of practices and results" and is pleased that the report is consistent with IFAD's approach as expressed in its corporate policy on gender equality and women's empowerment.
2. Notwithstanding Management's reservations about the nature of evaluation syntheses and how they are distinguished from other evaluations conducted by IOE, this evaluation synthesis provides useful findings related to the relevance, effectiveness and impact of interventions that have successfully targeted women and empowered them in various ways.
3. The evaluation synthesis thus complements IOE's corporate-level evaluation (CLE) of IFAD's Performance with regard to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2010) which found that the Fund systematically addressed gender equality and women's empowerment in its design, but there was room for improvement in that staff and implementation units were not consistent and clear in the measures they proposed to address inequality.
4. Management in particular welcomes efforts to define the characteristics of transformative practice.

### Findings

5. Management is pleased that the report underlines that IFAD is making good progress in implementing its corporate policy on gender equality and women's empowerment. This is consistent with the findings by the UN Women in its recent reports on the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP), which recognizes that IFAD is making excellent progress against most indicators covered in UN-SWAP.
6. The CLE found that the Fund systematically addressed gender equality and women's empowerment in project design. At the same time, the CLE underlined there was room for improvement during implementation, for instance, in building project management units' and IFAD staff capacity to address issues related to reducing inequality and for collecting gender-disaggregated data for monitoring progress and learning.
7. Since the 2010 CLE, Management has put in place a number of instruments and processes to address the aforementioned concerns, including strengthening the review of gender issues in supervision missions and reports, in-house training of staff on gender and the adoption of more differentiated approaches to gender mainstreaming based on country and project contexts. The success of these measures are underlined in the 2016 Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE), which finds that more than 90 per cent of IFAD operations are either moderately satisfactory or better in promoting gender equality.<sup>2</sup>
8. Management is currently revising its organizational architecture towards a clear, responsive and implementation-conducive institutional structure to further mainstream gender, together with climate change and nutrition through a composite lens. IFAD Management has made corporate commitments on three cross-cutting areas: gender, climate and nutrition which are of significant importance to IFAD's operations irrespective of their technical thematic focus. There is now also a growing understanding of the interconnected and mutually reinforcing nature of these themes. Mainstreaming of these core-priorities in IFAD's

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<sup>1</sup> The Programme Management Department sent the final Management's response to the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD on 3 March 2017.

<sup>2</sup> See document at <https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/118/docs/EB-2016-118-R-8.pdf>.

lending operations suggests moving away from free-standing projects or components that treat gender, climate or nutrition, in a mutually exclusive manner.

### **Methodology and process**

9. The gender ESR has drawn on a sample of IOE evaluations of IFAD-supported projects that were designed in the period 2001-2005. In this regard, it is important to underline that these projects were designed before the adoption of IFAD's first corporate policy on gender, at a time when IFAD was still articulating its approach to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Though IFAD had a Gender Plan of Action covering the period 2002-2006, the tools to properly implement the Action Plan, including guidelines for project supervision and the arms-length quality assurance mechanisms for project design, were introduced thereafter.
10. Hence, the findings presented in the ESR on gender, though useful, should be interpreted with a degree of caution. Moreover, given the extensive progress IFAD has made in recent years to mainstream gender, it is important to highlight that the findings in the ESR might not fully capture the current approaches to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in IFAD operations. For instance, in 2016, the quality assurance group rated 89 per cent of the projects as moderately satisfactory or better at entry for gender.<sup>3</sup>
11. On another issue, while information from external research and sources has been included in the ESR, a more comprehensive analysis from the benchmarking exercise undertaken with the experiences of other multilateral development banks on gender in the agriculture sector would have been useful. This would have helped IFAD Management learn lessons of relevance to IFAD's context from the work of other development actors.
12. Management appreciates the in-house learning workshop on gender transformative pathways that was organized in the course of preparing the ESR, to stimulate dialogue and reflection. It used the theory of change to introduce gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) into specific thematic areas such as natural resource management, agricultural and livestock production, value chain development, land and water resources, rural finance and rural institutions.

### **Learning**

13. While the comparison of past experiences and conceptualization of GEWE in specific contexts has its limitations, as indicated above, the review is useful in highlighting IFAD's long experience and progress on targeting and empowering women. The case studies (annex V) provide excellent illustrations and a good opportunity for sharing lessons learned. It would be useful to extract such case studies systematically and in a timely manner from all IOE evaluations and share them on a large scale.

### **Recommendations**

14. Management takes note of and agrees with the five recommendations of the ESR on gender. A detailed response to each recommendation is presented below.
15. **Recommendation 1. Conceptualize and integrate the gender transformative approach for use throughout the organization for IFAD10.**

Agreed. Management fully agrees with the need to conceptualize the gender transformative approach and develop a shared understanding of processes and practices. IFAD has a track record of supporting gender equality and women's empowerment from corporate strategy to operations, including in its human resources management. For instance, in IFAD's Strategic Framework 2016-2025, gender is identified as one of the five principles of engagement, which is a

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<sup>3</sup> See 2016 RIDE.

reflection of the importance IFAD places on the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment at the highest level.

Moreover, several key indicators with corresponding targets on gender are included in the IFAD10 results measurement framework, which ensures that the organization devotes due attention to the topic and is held accountable for its actions and performance. Regular monitoring and reporting on performance related to gender is conducted to guide decision-making by both the Senior Management and the governing bodies, particularly through the annual RIDE that includes a specific annex covering IFAD's performance on gender.

Going forward, increasing efforts will be made to improve the understanding and capacity to mainstream gender issues, in particular in their correlation to nutrition and climate change through the Country Programme Manager Academy.

In line with the Sustainable Development Goal agenda, IFAD set targets not only to increase the proportion of projects where gender is mainstreamed, but also to make interventions more transformative. Under IFAD10, it is suggested that 15 per cent of projects should be gender-transformative and 90 per cent of projects rated as partial gender mainstreaming (moderately satisfactory = 4) or better on completion.

Moreover, IFAD is committed to ensuring that women account for at least 35 per cent of all staff positions in the P-5 category or above in the IFAD10 period. Finally, at the corporate level, IFAD has been making efforts to quantify the administrative budget allocated annually to gender issues, which is an additional manner to ensure continued attention to the topic.

Clear definitions, benchmarks and indicators are needed, also for reporting under IFAD10. The evaluation synthesis is a useful first step towards a definition or operationalization of the concept "gender transformation". Further efforts are needed and IOE is invited to join this process of conceptualization.

**16. Recommendation 2. Develop explicit theories of change to underpin targeting strategies for different groups of women, together with indicators to monitor them at the point of design, and offer tailored interventions based on available good practices.**

Agreed. Management agrees with the use of theories of change in general, as an instrument to better design and implement IFAD-supported projects. Theories of change allow for more explicit articulation of the necessary steps from inputs to achieving desired outcomes and impacts, also in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

Moreover, the implementation of IFAD's development effectiveness framework – and strengthening of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity through the CLEAR grant initiative – are particularly timely to train IFAD staff and build the capacity of project staff and others in developing countries in the application of theories of change for better gender and other results on the ground.

**17. Recommendation 3. Establish systematic M&E of disaggregated benefits and GEWE outcomes at corporate and project levels.**

Agreed. Management agrees that there is need for better M&E and documentation of results, lessons and good practices of gender outcomes in self-evaluation processes. Several initiatives are underway to fully implement this important recommendation from the ESR, including the one outlined above.

In addition, IFAD is currently refining its Results and Impact Management System (RIMS) – for discussion with the Board in April 2017 – which includes strengthening gender indicators that are regularly monitored at the project level and reported for enhanced results management and learning. Similarly, key elements of the

Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), which measures the empowerment, agency and inclusion of women in agriculture dimensions, are being carefully built into the design of project impact assessments being done as part of the IFAD10 initiative on impact assessments, to better attribute the results to IFAD operations.

IFAD has also developed a methodology to take gender considerations into account in IFAD's loan portfolio and the regular budget. Two separate methodologies were developed in 2013 for: (i) conducting an ex ante analysis of gender sensitivity in IFAD loans; and (ii) identifying distribution of the regular budget for gender-related activities.

18. **Recommendation 4. Report consistently on GEWE outcomes and impacts in GEWE evaluations and include sound contextual analysis to explain results (IOE).**

Agreed. This recommendation is addressed to IOE. As such, Management welcomes the proposal for independent evaluations to better capture gender outcomes and impact, including deeper explanations of the proximate causes of good or less good performance. This will contribute to promoting accountability and learning throughout the organization.

19. **Recommendation 5: Replicate good practices covering the three GEWE policy objectives and strengthen working with men.**

(1) **Practices that worked well, but are not yet common, should be promoted (e.g. value chains, marketing, off-farm employment).**

Agreed. All IFAD-supported operations have a focus on specific sectors and within those sector gender specific approaches have been developed. There are good experiences on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in all sectors, in particular on rural finance, improving agricultural production and access to markets and diversification of income-generating opportunities.

(2) **Labour saving technologies and working with men are not common practices yet, but available evidence suggests that they can be highly effective. Practices to influence men and traditional leaders and practices to address women's time poverty should be widely integrated into IFAD's interventions.**

Agreed. Reducing rural women's workload is one of three pillars of IFAD's gender policy. The GEWE approach can be strengthened in infrastructure development, from roads, water and sanitation, irrigation to energy and warehouses. Only once women have more available time will they be able to engage more in economic activities and community matters. The involvement of men is a priority for IFAD as demonstrated in its efforts to promote participatory methods targeting all household members. IFAD has pioneered household methodologies, which have been included in the design of more than 40 new projects.

(3) **Practices that are common, but so far have yielded mixed results, should be improved based on the available international practices. IFAD should critically review some commonly held beliefs and assumptions about gendered benefits and promote services that are better tailored to the strategic needs of women (e.g. inclusive rural finance, infrastructure, functional skills training).**

Agreed. Interventions and services that are tailored to the strategic needs of women can strengthen their economic and social empowerment.

(4) **Some practices are highly relevant, but not yet effective or common (e.g. promotion of income-generating activities, land rights), often because they are meeting contextual limitations (social and cultural**

**values, institutional and legal frameworks). For those, the assumptions and influencing factors (in their theories of change) that have been limiting their effectiveness and wider application need to be carefully reviewed. The wider application of those practices needs to be accompanied with adequate strategies to address the systemic issues that may limit their effectiveness.**

Agreed. IFAD is trying to encourage reflections on the contextual circumstances of any development intervention. However, within the well-defined set-up of an investment project it might be not possible to give enough attention to the review of systematic issues, unless it is accompanied by a research programme.

- (5) **Policy engagement and scaling up successful GEWE practices are key to enabling transformative change. There are some good practices already, but they need to be more widely understood and applied within IFAD.**

Agreed. IFAD is continuously collecting evidence from its operations to further define drivers and pathways for scaling up GEWE and how those can be set in motion and sustained in a project. Potential gender-sensitive innovations for scaling up need to be identified at the design stage and monitored throughout.



**India - Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Development Project. Community members work together to construct a house in Powerguda village. Government rural housing schemes are designed to engage local people in all phases of house construction from conception to actual building.**

**©IFAD/Radhika Chalasani**





# What works for gender equality and women's empowerment – a review of practices and results

## Evaluation synthesis

### I. Introduction

#### A. Background

1. This evaluation synthesis report on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) practices and results was produced by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE). An evaluation synthesis report consolidates and presents key evaluation findings and lessons around a selected learning theme, with the aim of identifying underlying causal mechanisms and how they work and under what conditions. Because its scope is also defined by the availability of evaluative evidence, it differs from other forms of research, which draw evidence from a wider range of sources and data collection methods.
2. The main purpose of this synthesis is to support learning on which GEWE practices work and under what conditions, and to identify transformative GEWE practices that should be further promoted and scaled up in the near future. For the period of the Tenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD10), IFAD has committed to improve its performance on gender practices, in particular the share of GEWE interventions aiming at transformative change. There is no agreed definition of 'transformative' within IFAD yet. In this report we focus on approaches that aim to overcome the root causes of inequality and discrimination through promoting sustainable (inclusive) and far-reaching change (see section 4C).

Box 1

#### Definitions of gender equality and women's empowerment

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. (UN Women Training Centre's Glossary)

Women's (and girl's) empowerment is a social process which enhances women's and girls' capacity to act independently and self-determined, control assets, and make choices and decisions about all aspects of one's life. (INGENAES Project. 2015. Gender Glossary)

3. **A corporate commitment to GEWE.** IFAD's goal is to empower poor rural women and men in developing countries to achieve higher incomes and improved food security. Gender equality is at the heart of IFAD's mandate and closely linked to IFAD's commitment to eradicating rural poverty in developing countries. Many of IFAD's policies have gender considerations embedded within their principles and approaches, in particular the Targeting Policy of 2006 and the Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples of 2009. The former states that IFAD will address gender differences and have a special focus on women within all identified target groups, for reasons of equity, effectiveness and impact. Particular attention will be paid to women heads of households, who are often especially disadvantaged. The latter policy sets out a special commitment to improve the well-being of indigenous women. As outlined in IFAD's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy (2012), addressing gender inequalities and empowering women is vital to meeting the challenge of improving food and nutrition security, and enabling poor rural people to overcome poverty.
4. Gender equality and empowerment are included in the five principles of engagements in IFAD's current Strategic Framework (2016-2025). The Framework recognizes that poverty is frequently a consequence of the way rural people are

marginalized. Legal and policy frameworks, social and cultural norms, budget allocations and government capacity, rather than appreciating women's important role as drivers of sustainable development, often limit the access of women and other marginalized groups to productive assets and undermine their social status, decision-making power and ability to benefit from public services and exercise their citizenship rights. Women, therefore, need to be empowered to unleash their enormous productive potential. IFAD is committed to ensuring that poor rural communities and individuals, particularly women, indigenous peoples and young people, become part of a rural transformation that is inclusive and drives overall sustainable development.

5. **Ongoing GEWE initiatives with Rome-based agencies.** Ongoing initiatives and work undertaken jointly by the Rome-based agencies include the five-year UN Women/FAO/IFAD/WFP Joint Programme Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (RWE) (2012-2017) which aims to economically empower rural women in selected countries, by improving their food and nutrition security, increasing their access to and control over productive resources, services and income, reducing their workload and strengthening their participation in and leadership of rural producer organizations.<sup>4</sup>
6. **Towards a new development agenda.** 2016 also marked the transition to the new 2030 development agenda. In 2015, with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UN Member States committed to a renewed and more ambitious framework for development. The SDG Agenda is all about transformative change. In its preamble, the Outcome Document calls for bold and transformative steps, which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. It includes a number of goals that are of a transformative nature to overcome the root causes of inequality and discrimination through promoting sustainable and far-reaching change.

## **B. Objectives, scope and key questions**

7. The objectives of this synthesis are to:
  - (a) Identify gender-transformative practices that can inform future IFAD interventions under Agenda 2030; and
  - (b) Identify key factors enabling (or hindering) GEWE.
8. **Scope.** The synthesis focuses on the operational part of IFAD's programme and, within this, on programme and project-level interventions which address issues of GEWE within the context of the agricultural sector and rural development.
9. **Timeframe.** The period covered by this synthesis starts from 2011, after the completion of the first corporate-level evaluation (CLE) on GEWE. For the period 2011-2015, the synthesis reviewed a sample of evaluation products that contained substantive evidence on GEWE interventions in IFAD operations. This coincides with the period when gender was rated as a stand-alone criterion by IOE. The projects evaluated during this period would have typically been designed ten years earlier, under the first and second IFAD strategic frameworks.
10. **Evaluation questions.** The synthesis was guided by the following overall questions. They were elaborated into detailed review questions, covering the IOE evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability:<sup>5</sup>
  - (a) Which practices and interventions worked well in achieving sustainable GEWE results, as outlined in the IFAD gender policy? To what extent did they contribute to transformative GEWE change?

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<sup>4</sup> Also, this synthesis was intended to be conducted jointly by the evaluation offices of IFAD, World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), but due to unforeseen reasons, FAO and WFP withdrew from the evaluation.

<sup>5</sup> The detailed review questions are presented in the evaluation framework (annex I).

- (b) Which strategies and interventions did not work?
- (c) What are the key factors (including contextual factors) explaining success or failure?

## C. Evidence base and methodology for this synthesis

11. Gender equality and women's empowerment are systematically covered in all IOE evaluation products. IOE evaluations mainly focus on the achievement of GEWE results according to the three objectives IFAD's gender policy (2012) or, before that, the IFAD Gender Plan of Action (GPoA) (2003) (see table 2). They usually include ratings for GEWE, based on the level of achievements. Since IFAD started reviewing GEWE in 2003, it has produced 251 assessments of gender-related interventions.
12. For the period of this synthesis (2011-2015), 163 GEWE ratings are available from 18 country programme evaluations (CPEs), 33 project performance assessments (PPAs), 66 project completion report validations (PCRVs), and 2 impact evaluations. Table 1 presents the number of GEWE ratings across evaluations per year, starting in 2011.

Table 1

**Number of gender equality and women's empowerment ratings across evaluations per year\***

<i>Evaluation type</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>Grand total</i>
Country programme evaluations	17	7	16	16	6	62
Impact evaluations				1	1	2
Project completion report verifications	12	10	12	9	23	66
Project performance assessments	4	8	6	9	6	33
Grand total	<b>33</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>163</b>

\* Year in which the evaluation was included in the Annual Report on IFAD Results and Impacts (ARRI).

Source: IOE evaluation database (January 2016).

13. **Sampling of evaluation products.** The synthesis selected a sample of evaluation reports through a five step process, which included initial screening of the available evidence as the first step. Secondly, we identified 17 reports with GEWE ratings of 4 and 6 that covered at least three criteria: reporting on GEWE (1) outcomes and (2) strategies backed by field-level evidence (3), from PPAs or other evaluations. The third step was to include reports on "successful" GEWE practices, with ratings of 5 or higher, by applying a less stringent filter of criteria, thereby increasing the sample to 36. The fourth step was to identify the low ratings (2 or 3) that provided the required minimum of evidence, which led to an additional seven reports being included in the sample. The fifth step was to adjust the resulting sample for representativeness in terms of region and subsector composition. The final sample included 57 reports (23 PCRVs, 19 PPAs, 13 CPEs and 2 impact evaluations). The list of sampled evaluations is included in annex II. For ease of reference, the evaluations were numbered. Whenever the synthesis refers to an evaluation, it uses the hash (#) plus the number of the evaluation as listed in annex II.
14. **Systematic review of documented practices.** The reports were systematically reviewed, using the evaluation questions for this synthesis, and all findings and observations were recorded in a template. To the extent possible, the synthesis tried to extract information about the contextual factors that have enabled the achievement of results, based on the evaluative evidence. For practices that were "highly successful" (or transformative), the synthesis consulted additional evidence, such as CPE background papers, IFAD's Strategy and Knowledge Department's impact studies or project completion reports, to better understand the processes and factors that have supported these practices. A total of 33 examples of GEWE practices were written up as case studies and 20 of them are

included in annex V. The case studies helped to better understand why certain practices have worked (or not worked), in particular the context and the main factors for success or failure.

15. **Establishing external validity.** For generalization of findings, the synthesis constructed a typology of GEWE strategies, interventions and practices emerging from the evaluative evidence. The synthesis classified practice areas and GEWE results, within the impact pathway of the theory of change (ToC), developed for this synthesis (chapter IV). Based on this generic ToC, more specific ToCs were developed for IFAD's thematic intervention areas. Comparative review of GEWE practices that have worked elsewhere in the context of similar interventions or sectors helped to identify general lessons (chapter VIII). The process of validation included a review of documented practices from IFAD and other organizations (e.g. Department for International Development, World Bank, United Nations Development Programme).
16. **Determining GEWE effectiveness and impact** is not straightforward. IOE GEWE ratings reflect the extent to which interventions have contributed to IFAD policy areas. They provide an overall judgement which does not further differentiate specific aspects of relevance, effectiveness or impact for GEWE interventions. For this synthesis we used GEWE ratings as an indicator for the overall performance on GEWE. In addition, we used the GEWE transformation index developed for this synthesis to assess the relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of GEWE interventions. The GEWE transformation index is presented in annex IV. For example, to assess effectiveness the review of sample projects recorded types of practices and results according to the GEWE theory of change (chapter IV). The effectiveness and transformative impact of GEWE interventions was then determined through a combined score that included the IOE GEWE ratings and the types of results and impacts achieved (chapter V).
17. **Benchmarking good practices.** The evaluation synthesis developed some benchmarks for gender-transformative practices, in line with the Agenda 2030. These have been the basis of analysis for this evaluation synthesis to 'look forward', and allow IFAD to take stock of where it stands in relation to the Agenda. A characteristic of the sample reviewed by this synthesis is that the interventions were conceived under the MDGs. They may thus not reflect the 'transformative' language of the SDGs, but a number of practices identified by this review showed clear transformative characteristics and potential. While the Agenda 2030 is new – in terms of inter-connectedness and a more integrated approach – the underlying concepts of equity and social transformation that underpin it are not, and they have been applied in many of IFAD's projects for some time.

## **D. Limitations**

18. The most significant constraint for this evaluation synthesis, is the limited depth of the analysis included in IOE evaluations with regard to the specific topic, in this case GEWE. Screening the available evidence helped in identifying a suitable sample of evaluations which included some analysis of GEWE results, as well as the underlying strategies. Nevertheless, the exact level of quality of this evidence could not be assessed until the detailed analysis of the evidence was done. From this perspective, the available evidence and its quality inevitably put a limitation on the range – and diversity of practices that can be captured by this synthesis.
19. An evaluation synthesis generates findings mainly from secondary sources (evaluation reports of IFAD's loan investments). The evidence used for this evaluation is derived from different types of evaluation products, including CLEs, ESs, PPAs, impact evaluations, CPEs and PCRVs. The level of detail and analysis of gender-specific interventions varies considerably. It cannot be assumed, however, that any type of product provides better quality of evidence. Rather, the level of analysis and quality of evidence is determined by the approach and methodology of

the evaluations, methods, and, last but not least, the expertise of the evaluation teams.

20. This affects the nature, quality and reporting of evidence provided in the evaluations when these discuss GEWE. For the sake of brevity, evaluations do not usually provide evidence-backed statements or provide exhaustive explanations of why and how an intervention worked. The review of additional documents for the case studies showed that this information can be found, but is rarely summarized in the evaluation report itself. Finally, due to the limited resources available, project evaluations do not conduct in-depth analysis in the field of whether or how social change occurred as a result of a project. Where evaluations report on social change, this is often done more in an anecdotal than systematic manner. More robust evidence on results is usually related to outputs, such as beneficiary numbers,<sup>6</sup> based on indicators monitored by the projects. Linking these to long-term transformational changes remains difficult.
21. Another limitation is related to the effort to isolate certain GEWE practices from the rest of the project, with a view to determining the impact trail on long-term GEWE transformational changes. In reality, most projects in IFAD are multisectoral and work in an integrated manner to achieve impact. As women's constraints are typically multifaceted, the success of interventions is likely to depend on multiple types of interventions. In many of the projects reviewed, this is recognized. A challenge has, therefore, been in establishing whether a GEWE activity led or did not lead to the impact described in the report. In this respect, a nuanced approach to identifying the practices also involved understanding where the activity sat within impact pathways, as understood from the evaluation, even if the evaluation did not explicitly state the links.
22. A related limitation is the analysis of gender constraints in particular contexts. Very few of the project documents are explicit about what analysis underlies the interventions, what the most important gender constraints are, and what strategies were chosen to identify these. The absence of information does not imply such analysis was not carried out, but does hinder the ability to synthesize approaches and extract lessons learned.
23. Another limitation which this synthesis has in common with others is the time lag between project implementation and evaluation. For the period covered by the available IOE evaluations, projects were guided by the IFAD GPoA (and the following Gender Policy), to be implemented at the individual and community level.<sup>7</sup> More recent advancements, such as the introduction of household methodologies, are yet to be evaluated. Nevertheless, the synthesis has tried to capture any emerging evidence about changes in intra-household gender relations, including the voice of women in determining household priorities and spending patterns, and the overall distribution of workloads.

## **E. Process**

24. IOE established a core learning partnership (CLP) for this evaluation synthesis, to provide inputs, insights and comments during the process. The CLP is important in ensuring ownership of the evaluation results by the main stakeholders and the utilization of its recommendations. The CLP included the IOE evaluation team, the PTA Gender Desk and focal points from the Programme Management Department and the Strategy and Knowledge Department, appointed by Management.
25. A major milestone in the process was a workshop to discuss the ToC prepared by this synthesis and, based on this, elaborate more specific ToCs, along key IFAD

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the number of women who benefited from the project, the number of women representative in certain committees, the number of women trained.

<sup>7</sup> Some interventions consider simultaneous interventions at different levels, 77.2 per cent of the 57 evaluations included interventions focused at individual level and 63.2 per cent at community level. About half of the sample mentioned some interventions or effects at the household level, while only 5.3 per cent at societal level.

intervention themes (including rural finance, natural resources management, livestock, marketing and agricultural technology). The half-day workshop held in September 2016 was jointly organized by IOE and PTA.<sup>8</sup>

26. Thematic groups – hosted by PTA technical specialists and IOE ToC experts – developed detailed pathways for transformative change. The discussion was initially based on the case studies of IFAD-supported projects prepared by IOE and then widened to include assumptions or additional actions to trace through the intervention logic. Attention was paid to drawing up the sequencing of actions and results, the causal linkages and – where applicable – any feedback loops. The discussion placed particular emphasis on how “transformative” outcomes and changes could be achieved. This highly participatory process generated 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 gender-transformative results. The discussion also highlighted the “gaps”, in terms of missing links or actions that would have been required to enable truly transformative changes.

### **Report structure**

27. The report is organized in ten chapters. After this introduction, it presents the global context for GEWE and the need for greater attention to gender-transformative practices, against the backdrop of the Agenda 2030 (chapter II). This is followed by an overview of IFAD policies, strategies and institutional performance on GEWE, which provides a benchmark for assessing GEWE practices (chapter III). Chapter IV presents the analytical framework for this synthesis. The analysis of findings will follow a ToC identifying transformative pathways towards GEWE. The ToC also provides the organizing principle for the typology of GEWE practices, which will guide the review throughout the following chapters. The systematic review of GEWE practices according to the applicable evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability) is included in chapter V. This is followed by chapter VI, presenting good practices on GEWE and key factors contributing to the success or failure of gender interventions. Chapter VII then presents good practices from this synthesis and from international literature on gender-inclusive poverty reduction. This finally leads to the lessons (chapter VIII), conclusions (chapter IX) and recommendations (chapter X) on practices that should be considered for scaling up in future IFAD interventions, within the context of Agenda 2030.

### **Key points**

- The synthesis focuses on the operational part of IFAD’s programme and, within this, on programme and project-level interventions for the period 2011-2015.
- For this period, 18 CPEs, 33 PPAs, 66 PCRVs, and 2 impact evaluations are available.
- The synthesis selected a sample of evaluation reports through a five step process, which included initial screening of the available evidence as a first step.
- The final sample included 57 reports (23 PCRVs, 19 PPAs, 13 CPEs and 2 impact evaluations).
- The synthesis used four standard evaluation criteria to review the GEWE practices: relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.
- The review questions are presented in the evaluation framework (annex I).

<sup>8</sup> A report on the workshop is available at <https://www.ifad.org/documents/10180/1aa97247-8f4d-4f1b-aef6-70fe3f713406>.



## II. Context

### A. Gender inequality globally

29. It is broadly recognized that providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes is not only important from the point of view of equity or justice, but can also help fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large.<sup>9</sup> Globally, there has been progress against many indicators of women's empowerment. There have been improvements in education, health, economic opportunity, and political empowerment.<sup>10</sup> But the progress has differed across regions. Improvements have tended to be slowest in South Asia, the Middle East and Central Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa.
30. Across different spheres of women's empowerment globally, most progress has been made against indicators of health and education, less in economic empowerment, and least in political empowerment.<sup>11</sup> In the economic sphere, large gender differences in labour force participation remain, and wage disparities are declining only very slowly. Political participation remains highly unequal, despite positive examples of countries that have established quotas.

### B. The transformative gender goals of Agenda 2030

*"Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world."*

(Source: [www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/))

31. **Agenda 2030** implies "a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative goals and targets." This implies a commitment that "no one will be left behind", that "goals and targets [are] met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society ... [and] ... endeavour to reach the furthest behind first."<sup>12</sup> Agenda 2030 emphasizes that universal human rights and social and economic inclusion are at the heart of sustainable development, and that sustainable development means eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, combating inequality, preserving the planet, creating sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and fostering social inclusion.
32. The SDG Agenda promotes gender equality and women's empowerment as basic human rights across all development goals. It demands that all forms of gender discrimination be addressed for poor and less poor women alike. Its vision includes every woman and girl enjoying full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment removed.
33. Following commitments enshrined in global treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women<sup>13</sup> and that of the International Conference on Population and Development, the increased commitment to gender is articulated in SDG5, often seen as a 'transformative' goal: to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". The three components of the stand-alone goal are: freedom from violence; access to resources, knowledge and health; and voice, leadership and participation.
34. An important lesson from the MDGs was that the cross-cutting and multidimensional nature of gender power and inequality cannot be effectively

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>.

<sup>10</sup> Recent overviews include <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2016/wp1621.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> World Economic Forum <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2015/>.

<sup>12</sup> Research by Ravallion indicates that the poorest globally have not benefited from growth or income increases over the last two decades (<http://voxeu.org/article/assessing-progress-poorest-new-evidence>). Olinto et al. describe characteristics of the world's poor (by \$1.25/day), which include dependence on agriculture particularly smallholder farming (<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTPREMNET/Resources/EP125.pdf>).

<sup>13</sup> [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw).

addressed through a single target. Roots of deprivation and inequality cut across multiple aspects of people's lives and are not specific to particular issues such as education or health or hunger. Evidence on the MDGs shows that certain groups or people were consistently left behind, in particular poor women; young women; migrants and *Dalits*; ethnic, religious or racial minorities and indigenous peoples.<sup>14</sup>

35. Many of the SDGs have gender-disaggregated or specific targets, such as the reduction of poverty and access to resources (in SDG1), and full and productive employment and decent work (in SDG8). The reference to gender in SDG2 is particularly relevant, to "double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment" by 2030.
36. Economic empowerment of women features strongly in the SDGs, reflecting global recognition of its multiplier effect for development. Empowerment is about expanding opportunities and acquiring the power to make choices. Empowerment requires not only a change in power relations at the family and community levels, but also at societal level in terms of the recognition of the needs and rights of women on an equal footing to men. Thus, women's empowerment is an important step towards reducing inequalities in the economic, social and political spheres.<sup>15</sup>
37. The SDG Agenda brings in a new focus on horizontal inequality and marginalized groups, as well as on the multiple dimensions of well-being. Addressing inequality and exclusion is an end and ethical goal in itself, but is also seen as a means to other goals. Research has shown that high and rising inequalities can hamper poverty reduction, but also economic growth and productivity. Forms of inequalities (not gender specific) that can be particularly damaging include discrimination, lack of access to justice, corruption, restrictions on migration, constraints on human development, and lack of access to financial services.<sup>16</sup>
38. The emphasis on 'leaving no one behind' also emphasizes a need to consider how gender disadvantages and discrimination interact (and intersect) with other forms of disparities.<sup>17</sup> Women do not form a homogeneous group, and gender inequality may differ across (and may be, but is not necessarily reinforced by) social-economic groups based on race, caste, religion, location (rural-urban), migrant status, or indigenous groups. Again, this is of critical importance for interventions and evaluation, as outcomes are likely to be determined by the interaction of disadvantages, and there is a need to look at data beyond sex disaggregation, but also to disaggregated data for marginalized groups, people with disabilities, migrants, indigenous people, etc.
39. The role of gender inequalities in agriculture and rural production is of course particularly important for the discussion here.<sup>18</sup> Evidence demonstrates that women tend to produce less per hectare, that they face unequal returns and access to land, often have less access to (or benefit from) services like agricultural

<sup>14</sup> Gita Sen. 2013. Gender Equality in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Lessons from the MDGs. IDS Bulletin Volume 44, No. 5-6.

<sup>15</sup> Deepta Chopra and Catherine Muller. 2016. Connecting Perspectives on Women's Empowerment. IDS Bulletin Vol. 47 No 1A.

<sup>16</sup> Ravallion, M. (2009) Economic growth and poverty reduction: Do poor countries need to worry about inequality? In: J. Braun, R. Varvas Hill and R. Pmadya-Lorch (eds.) *The Poorest and Hungry – Assessment, Analysis and Action*. Washington, D.C.: IFPRI, pp. 179–186. Kevin Watkins 2013.

<sup>17</sup> Maria Bustelo and others (2015).

<sup>18</sup> The World Bank's Africa [Gender Innovation Lab](http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/579161468007198488/pdf/860390WP0WB0ON0osure0date0March0180.p) is the largest programme of research on gender gaps in agriculture in Africa and is currently expanding to other regions. The World Bank's and ONE Campaign's [Levelling the Field](http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/579161468007198488/pdf/860390WP0WB0ON0osure0date0March0180.p) describes gender inequalities in agriculture in six African countries (<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/579161468007198488/pdf/860390WP0WB0ON0osure0date0March0180.p>). See also <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENAGRLIVSOUBOOK/Resources/CompleteBook.pdf>.

extension, and therefore may be limited in access to commercialized agriculture.<sup>19</sup> A recent World Bank publication estimates the high cost of gender gaps in agricultural production, and emphasizes that the SDG framework provides the opportunity to move from a silo to an integrated approach to address this.<sup>20</sup>

40. The need for an integrated approach is not only highlighted by the impact it has on productivity and economic growth, but also by the impact on other aspects of well-being and inter-relatedness of various goals.<sup>21</sup> There is evidence, for example, that more equal distribution of resources can have a positive impact on health indicators. Social norms often hamper progress in economic or political empowerment. Women's time burden or role in the care economy, and violence against women, can negatively impact possibilities for economic empowerment. This inter-connectedness has important implications for interventions, particularly if these aim to be 'transformational', and may explain cases where women tend to benefit less from interventions, such as training for small business owners.

Box 2

#### Definition of gender-transformative approaches

Gender-transformative approaches aim to move beyond individual self-improvement among women and toward transforming the power dynamics and structures that serve to reinforce gendered inequalities. Gender-transformative approaches go beyond the "symptoms" of gender inequality to address "the social norms, attitudes, behaviours, and social systems that underlie them". This approach entails engaging groups in critically examining, challenging and questioning gender norms and power relations that underlie visible gender gaps. (Hillenbrand et al. 2015. p. 5)

## C. Towards transformative change

41. IFAD is committed to enhancing the impact of its programming on gender equality. It has set targets not only to increase the proportion of projects where gender is mainstreamed, but also to make its interventions more transformative, in line with the SDG Agenda, and with a view to having innovations go to scale. It is important to emphasize that there is no clear agreed definition or operationalization of this concept, in IFAD or elsewhere. Moreover, there is little evidence of transformational approaches in existing evaluations. The emphasis of this part of the review is therefore to stress what experience with transformational approaches does exist, with a view to informing future operations with lessons and recommendations.
42. For the purpose of this evaluation synthesis, transformative approaches are defined as those that aim to overcome the root causes of inequality and discrimination through promoting sustainable, inclusive and far-reaching social change. Transformative approaches have the common factor that they challenge existing social norms and the distribution of power and resources.<sup>22</sup> For the review, we focused on two, inter-related aspects of this. First, we ask whether interventions have had impact beyond the direct project outcomes (recognizing that measurement of this is challenging within projects). For example, is there evidence that enhanced access to rural finance (one of the most common gender-focused interventions) has led to improved or sustained well-being of households and women?

<sup>19</sup> [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2013/02/21/000158349\\_20130221150818/Rendered/PDF/wps6370.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2013/02/21/000158349_20130221150818/Rendered/PDF/wps6370.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> UN Women, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, and the World Bank Group (2015). *The cost of the gender gap in agricultural productivity in Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2015/10/25155021/cost-gender-gap-agricultural-productivity-malawi-tanzania-uganda>.

<sup>21</sup> Abu Ghaida, D., and Klasen, S. (2004). The cost of missing the Millennium Development Goal on gender equity. *World Development*, 32(7): 1075-1107; also [http://eadi.org/gc2011/lo\\_bue-386.pdf](http://eadi.org/gc2011/lo_bue-386.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> A good source is [http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/working\\_paper\\_aas\\_gt\\_change\\_measurement\\_fa\\_lowres.pdf](http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/working_paper_aas_gt_change_measurement_fa_lowres.pdf).

43. Second, addressing 'root causes' means more than providing equal access to resources and services. This aspect asks the question of the underlying reasons for disparities in access. These are often perceptions, norms and gender roles – aspects of societies' organization that cannot change easily, or will change only over time, and may even experience reversals. The fact that there are underlying causes of disparities in access also helps explain why women are disadvantaged in multiple spheres, and why projects often have multiple entry points when addressing gender disparities.
44. To be transformative, and to be able to report on it, two basic and related principles are important. First, transformation and entry points towards it are context-specific, and take into account that women are not a homogeneous group. The participatory approaches that underlie many projects, though often not well-documented, are an important stepping stone. Second, design of interventions need to make a clear assessment of the causes of disparities in access, as well as the impact of enhanced access on relations between men and women, as there can be negative impacts. This means, as indicated, going beyond a description of the extent of disparities, and addressing the 'why' question. While a search for deeper causes of disparities may be seen as an additional cost in project preparation, it can also lead to increased project success and sustainability.

#### **Key points**

- The SDG Agenda promotes gender equality and women's empowerment as basic human rights across all development goals.
- Addressing inequality and exclusion is an end and ethical goal in itself, but is also seen as a means to other goals.
- IFAD has set targets to make its interventions more transformative, in line with the SDG Agenda, and with a view to taking innovations to scale.
- We define transformative approaches as those that aim to overcome the root causes of inequality and discrimination, through promoting sustainable (inclusive) and far-reaching social change.
- Transformation and entry points towards it are context-specific, and take into account women are not a homogeneous group.
- The design of interventions needs to make a clear assessment of the causes of disparities in access, as well as the impact of enhanced access on relations between men and women.

### **III. IFAD GEWE policy framework and follow up**

#### **A. IFAD's mandate**

45. IFAD is the only international financial institution with a specific mandate to reduce rural poverty through investments in agriculture and rural development. It was established as an international financial institution in 1977 to mobilize resources to invest in development opportunities for poor rural people. The fund works in close collaboration with borrowing country governments and local communities to design, supervise and assess country-led programmes and projects that support smallholders and poor rural producers.
46. IFAD's goal is to empower poor rural women and men in developing countries to achieve higher incomes and improved food security. Gender equality is at the heart of IFAD's mandate and closely linked to IFAD's commitment to eradicating rural poverty. Many of IFAD's policies have gender considerations embedded within their principles and approaches, in particular the Targeting Policy of 2006 and the Policy of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples of 2009. The former states that IFAD will address gender differences and have a special focus on women within all identified target groups — for reasons of equity, effectiveness and impact — with particular attention to women heads of households, who are often especially disadvantaged, and the latter notes a special commitment to improve the well-being of indigenous women. As outlined in IFAD's gender policy (2012), addressing gender inequalities and empowering women are vital to meeting the challenge of improving food and nutrition security, and enabling poor rural people to overcome poverty.
47. IFAD's mandate to mainstream gender stems from the Agreed Conclusion 1997/2 on gender mainstreaming, which the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted based on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995. The 1990s saw a shift from a "women in development" approach to "gender and development" in IFAD's operations.<sup>23</sup> The first Strategic Framework for IFAD (1998-2000) highlighted the importance of the role of rural women for sustainable agriculture and rural development. The second IFAD Strategic Framework (2002-2006) further recognized that rural poverty reduction was intrinsically linked to women's empowerment and gender equality. The Framework articulated the role of women as agents of change for their communities. It acknowledged that powerlessness is a dimension of poverty and that gender inequality is a manifestation of poverty. It stated that gender issues should be addressed as a cross-cutting concern in all IFAD's work.

#### **B. Evolving GEWE policy framework**

48. Following the ECOSOC agreed conclusions (2002) on gender mainstreaming, IFAD adopted the GPoA (2003-2006) as an operational document with the aim of internalizing gender issues in the project cycle. The Plan's overall objective was to systematize and scale up efforts to mainstream gender perspectives in different aspects of IFAD's work and to comply with the United Nations commitment.
49. IFAD's efforts to mainstream gender were further accelerated in the follow-up to the report adopted by the Governing Council in 2010, which requested actions to strengthen capacities and improved monitoring systems for gender mainstreaming. In the same year, IOE conducted a CLE of IFAD's Performance with regard to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. The evaluation recommended, among other things, the development of a corporate policy on gender equality and women's empowerment.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> While the Women in Development approach targets women and focuses on activities exclusively for them, the Gender in Development approach focuses on the relationship between men and women, their differences, inequalities and similarities, and tries to provide solutions for the creation of a more equitable society.

<sup>24</sup> Corporate-level evaluation on IFAD's Performance with regard to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment <https://www.ifad.org/evaluation/reports/cle/tags/gender/y2010/1852967>.

50. **Corporate-level evaluation 2010.** The 2010 CLE conducted a meta-evaluation of 50 project evaluation reports. It found that projects classified as rural development projects were particularly relevant to women. Although they did not usually state specific gender objectives, they often resulted in substantial physical benefits to women as well as to men. The CLE also found that activities for women sometimes followed certain gender stereotypes, for example the provision of sewing machines, handicraft activities, etc., while at the same time women had not been explicitly considered for other project activities, such as those related to livestock and credit.
51. The CLE confirmed that economic and human capacity benefits in many cases translate into improved status and voice, mainly because women become more self-confident and financially independent, and are more involved in local decision-making. The CLE identified a major factor contributing to more effective gender interventions as the appointment of gender specialists and women officers in government project management units. The CLE found that most projects did devote adequate resources to gender-related initiatives, but that resources were not always well used because insufficient thought had been given to their suitability for the required activities.
52. The CLE concluded that overall project performance and performance on GEWE appear to be linked. When project design and implementation are attentive to GEWE, projects are more likely to be successful. This is because of the central role women play in promoting sustainable agriculture, and because of the importance of taking into account wider social dynamics, including gender relations, within development interventions. At the same time, poorly designed or implemented projects also have a negative impact on GEWE, an observation that is corroborated by this synthesis (see chapter V B).
53. The CLE recommended the preparation of a corporate policy on GEWE, the strengthening of knowledge management and learning and policy dialogue on GEWE. Another recommendation was that IOE should develop specific indicators and key questions for assessing GEWE in country programme and project evaluations.
54. **2012 IFAD GEWE Policy.** The IFAD Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment was approved by the Executive Board in April 2012. The policy covers both the business of IFAD (the loans and grants portfolio, knowledge management, communication and capacity-building) as well as promoting gender equality within the organization (including staffing and financial resources). The policy includes an implementation plan and sets out accountability of departments and divisions, including senior management staff.

Table 2

**Objectives of the IFAD Gender Plan of Action and the Gender Policy**

<i>Gender Plan of Action (2003)</i>	<i>Gender Policy (2012)</i>
Expand women's <i>access to and control over fundamental assets</i> – capital, land, knowledge and technologies	<b>Objective 1:</b> Promote <i>economic empowerment</i> to enable rural women and men to have equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, profitable economic activities.
Strengthen women's agency – their <i>decision-making</i> role in community affairs and representation in local institutions; and	<b>Objective 2:</b> Enable women and men to have <i>equal voice and influence</i> in rural institutions and organizations.
Improve <i>well-being</i> and ease workloads by facilitating access to basic rural services and infrastructures.	<b>Objective 3:</b> Achieve a more <i>equitable balance in workloads and in the sharing of economic and social benefits</i> between women and men.

55. **2015 Policy mid-term review.** PTA conducted a mid-term review (MTR) of the implementation of the gender policy in 2015. The policy was assessed as highly relevant, easily understood thanks to useful guidance for staff and widely known in-house. In particular, it was noted that it was very helpful in policy engagement

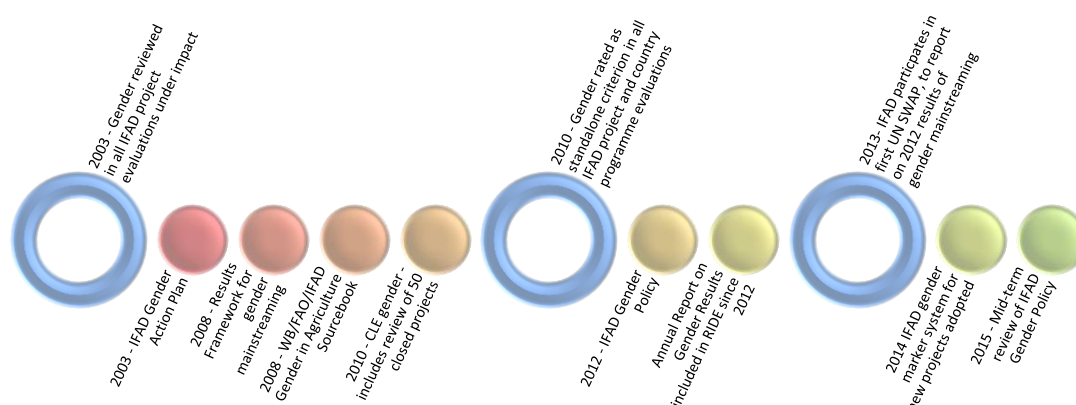


at country level and was well aligned with country priorities. According to the MTR, the demands on the gender architecture (e.g. the PTA Gender Desk, Programme Management Department regional gender coordinators and the gender focal points) have increased significantly and the present set-up struggles to cope with the level of innovation, scaling up and learning that are essential requirements of the new strategic framework (p. 7-8).

56. The MTR highlighted the paucity of evidence from the field. According to the MTR, the documentation of progress on the strategic objectives of the gender policy is largely anecdotal and is not accompanied by sufficient detail on how it was achieved for it to be replicated. The MTR concludes that this hinders IFAD's capacity to scale up and innovate good practices through more systematic learning around gender equality outcomes and impact, and they are achieved. There are many examples of excellence in individual projects (as recognized by the IFAD regional gender awards), but without project-level targets specifically relating to the gender policy goal and objectives, accompanied by baselines and outcome measures, it is not possible to have an accurate overview of IFAD's contribution to GEWE at outcome and impact level.
57. The MTR concluded that, overall, IFAD continues to do well in its contribution to GEWE compared to its United Nations and international financial institution peers, but that it will need to step up its efforts in order to live up to the ambition of the new strategic framework. Its great strength is the clarity and focus of its gender policy, which is well integrated into the strategic framework and programming systems. Recommendations for the way forward mainly referred to further strengthening the institutional arrangements and capacities for gender mainstreaming, and establishing a more systematic approach for tracking project performance and impact from a gender perspective.
58. **Timeline.** The following figure summarizes the processes that IFAD has undertaken to address GEWE in its interventions since 2003.

Figure 1

#### IFAD timeline on gender strategy and policy



### C. Enhanced strategic focus on transformative GEWE practices

59. The IFAD Strategic Framework (2016-2025) envisages IFAD consolidating its leading position on innovative gender practices by moving beyond mainstreaming and scaling up. IFAD wants to achieve real transformative gender impacts by addressing the root causes of gender inequalities through investments and policy engagement (pp. 18ff.). The Mid-Term Plan (2016-2018) aims to ensure that at

least 15 per cent of project designs are gender-transformative and at least 50 per cent achieve full gender mainstreaming.<sup>25</sup>

60. In 2009, IFAD started working with partners to develop household methodologies with the principal aim of promoting GEWE in rural and agricultural development. Household methodologies are participatory approaches used to promote equitable intra-household relations, fair division of labour and shared decision-making processes. The overall purpose of these methodologies is to create stronger, more resilient, sustainable smallholder farming systems, by achieving greater gender equality at the household level. The approaches have been rolled out among 75,000 to 100,000 households in sub-Saharan Africa so far.
61. Household methodologies<sup>26</sup> attempt to bundle the disparate livelihood strategies pursued by women and men (her plot, his plot, etc.) into one coherent strategy. The formation of a 'family vision' to which children, in many cases, contribute, enables the family to conceptualize and work towards a shared time-bound goal. Critically, household methodologies do not seek to empower one gender (women) at the seeming expense of the other (men). They adopt a 'power with' rather than a 'power to' approach, and work to promote the understanding that unequal power relations between women and men result in failures to make the best decisions possible, and thus contribute significantly to poverty.
62. IFAD, in collaboration with Oxfam/Novib, has promoted the use of the community-led Gender Action Learning System (GALS) as a transformative approach to agricultural development, through pilot activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Uganda.<sup>27</sup> GALS is a community-led empowerment methodology that uses principles of inclusion to improve income, and the food and nutrition security of vulnerable people in a gender-equitable way. It positions poor women and men as drivers of their own development, identifying and dismantling obstacles in their environment, and challenging service providers and private actors. GALS uses inclusive and participatory processes and simple mapping and diagram tools. It is designed as a complementary methodology that can be integrated into various economic development interventions.<sup>28</sup>

#### **D. Monitoring performance on GEWE**

63. Gender is the most comprehensively monitored dimension in IFAD's results system, with targets and reporting at three stages in the loan project cycle (entry, implementation and completion), as well as in human resource management and the administrative budget. IFAD reviews the level of gender integration at design, using a six-point scale ranging from gender blind to gender transformative. Projects are rated from a gender perspective at points of design, during implementation, and at completion and evaluation.
64. The PTA Gender Desk has developed a six-point gender marker to assess projects and programmes at design, during implementation, and at completion and evaluation (see table below).

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.ifad.org/documents/10180/d435b239-2ac4-459d-8cbf-00b94aa0e3e9>

<sup>26</sup> IFAD (2014) Household methodologies toolkit for gender equality and social inclusion. [https://www.ifad.org/topic/household\\_methodologies/overview](https://www.ifad.org/topic/household_methodologies/overview).

<sup>27</sup> See case study documentation for these countries (IFAD, 2014).

<sup>28</sup> Thies Reemer and Maggie Makanza. 2014. Gender Action Learning System: Practical Guide for Transforming Gender and Unequal Power Relations in Value Chains. Oxfam/Novib, GIZ/BMZ (German Corporation for International Cooperation/German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development).

Table 3  
IFAD gender mainstreaming markers

1	2	3	4	5	6
Gender blind	Gender neutral	Gender aware	Partial gender mainstreaming	Gender mainstreaming	Gender transformative
There were no attempts to address gender concerns or mainstream gender into project activities	Focus on gender issues was vague and erratic	Some limited measures were taken to strengthen gender focus and some efforts were made to facilitate the participation of women	Efforts were made to facilitate the participation of women and they accounted for a significant number of beneficiaries	Significant contribution to addressing gender needs and achieving GEWE, addressing all three gender policy objectives	Significant contribution to gender transformation, addressing all three gender policy objectives and engaging in policy dialogue

65. Since 2007, IFAD has produced the annual Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE), which also covers performance ratings on gender at design and completion. From 2012, the RIDE has included a dedicated section reporting on progress in the implementation of the IFAD Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.
66. The most recent Programme Management Department gender ratings (2014/2015) show that 82 per cent of the value of loans is rated moderately satisfactory or above (4-6) at project approval. This included 35 per cent that was fully mainstreamed (5) and 18 per cent that was transformative (6). For newly designed projects, the proportion of the total loan value described as "gender transformative" has increased from 8 per cent in 2012 to 21 per cent in 2015. For newly approved grants the proportion was even higher, 36 per cent of the total grant value in 2015.
67. **UN-SWAP.** IFAD has participated in the first United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) since it was introduced in 2013 (reporting on 2012 results). The UN-SWAP includes a set of 15 common performance indicators, clustered around six broad and functional areas, against which entities report to UN Women annually through an online reporting system. In 2015, IFAD exceeded the requirements for eight indicators. This accomplishment sets IFAD apart as one of the top performing entities in UN-SWAP.
68. One UN-SWAP indicator focuses specifically on gender in evaluations.<sup>29</sup> In 2015, the overall score for all the different types of IOE evaluations was in the higher end of the "meets requirements" category. Country programme evaluations were "exceeding requirements" and PPAs and synthesis evaluations "meeting requirements". The overall score placed IOE in a very strong position among all participating United Nations evaluation offices. Factors that have contributed to the overall result include IOE's guidance, which explains the need for GEWE aspects to be evaluated and a specific gender criterion applied in all project and country programme evaluations, and the use of evaluation consultants with gender expertise, particularly for CPEs and to some extent for PPAs.

## E. IOE performance ratings on GEWE

69. IOE has been systematically assessing gender results since it introduced its Methodological Framework for Project Evaluation in 2003. Gender equality and women's empowerment was reviewed (and rated) as one of six dimensions of poverty. The first IOE Evaluation Manual (2009) treated GEWE as an integral dimension within the various evaluation criteria adopted by IOE applying a mainstreaming approach, but no ratings were assigned for gender. In 2010, the CLE on gender recommended that IOE develop a distinct criterion on gender with a set of questions to be addressed.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1452>.

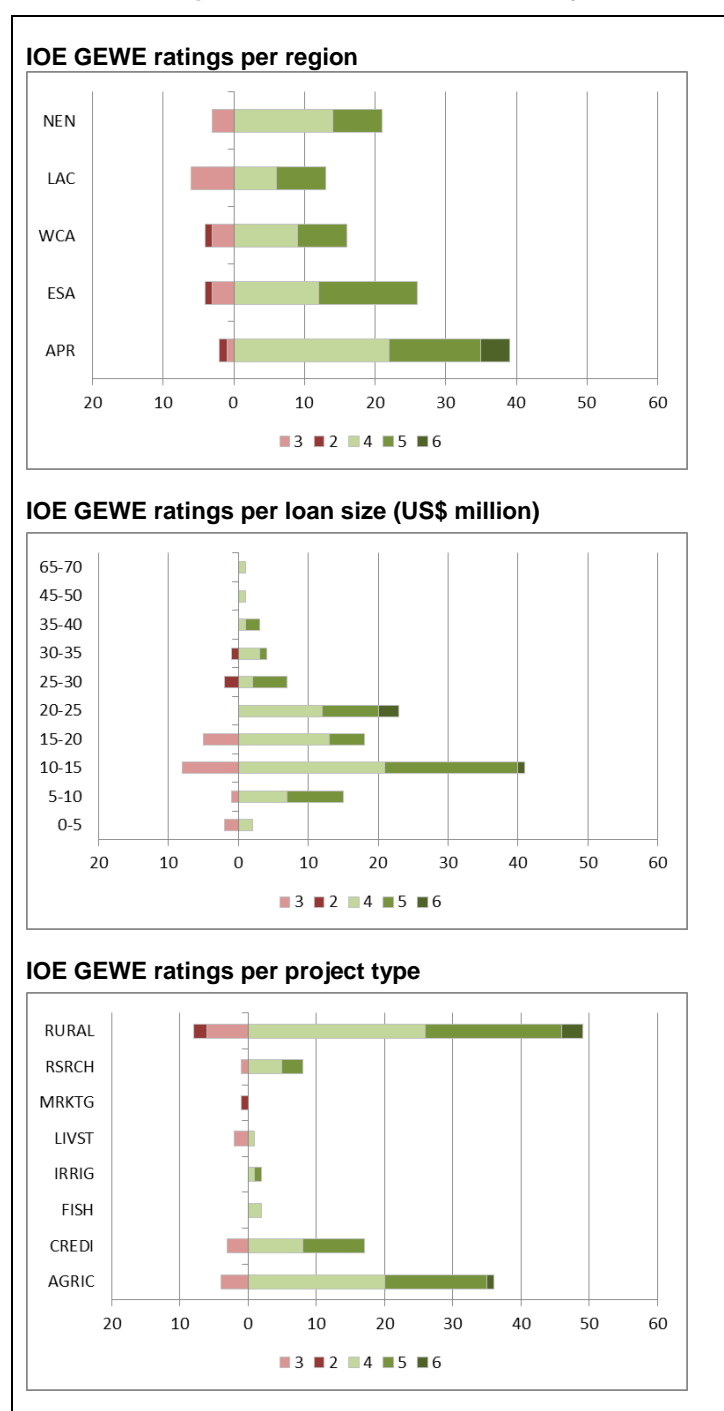
70. Since then, IOE has applied the criterion in all CPEs and project evaluations and started awarding ratings as of 2011. Ratings are presented in the IOE Annual Report on IFAD Results and Impacts (ARRI), which shows that IOE's GEWE ratings have improved since 2012.
71. Between 2011 and 2015, IOE evaluations rated 134 projects on GEWE.<sup>30</sup> In this period, 48 projects (35.8 per cent) were rated satisfactory (5); and four out of the 134 projects (3 per cent) were rated highly satisfactory (6). Almost half the projects evaluated since the introduction of the 2011 GEWE rating and before 2016 have been satisfactory and above. Only three projects were rated unsatisfactory (2).<sup>31</sup>
72. Analysis of ratings shows that the highly satisfactory projects were all located in the Asia and the Pacific region (APR). These were in agricultural or rural development projects, rather than in specific project types such as rural credit or value chain projects. The loan size of these projects also mostly ranged between US\$20 million and US\$25 million, though one project fell within the US\$10 million-US\$15 million range.
73. Projects rated satisfactory were mainly from the APR and East and Southern Africa (ESA) regions (over a quarter each). Similar to the highly satisfactory ratings, satisfactory GEWE ratings were mostly found in agricultural or rural development project types. Nearly a fifth was rural credit projects. Only four projects on irrigation and research had satisfactory ratings. Medium-size projects were more likely to have satisfactory GEWE ratings. Nearly 40 per cent of the projects with satisfactory GEWE ratings had a loan size of between US\$10 million and US\$15 million, though the vast majority fell in a broader range, between US\$5 million and US\$30 million.
74. On the lower end of the GEWE rating scale, the three unsatisfactory projects were distributed among the APR, ESA and the West and Central Africa (WCA) regions. One was a marketing project, while two were rural development projects. Their loan size fell between US\$26 million and US\$35 million. The regional, project type and loan size rating distributions are captured in figure 2.
75. The synthesis used IOE ratings only to a limited extent and mainly for the identification of the sample (see annex II). Our review, instead, looked at specific interventions and practices, with the aim of identifying those that work better and those that did not work as well. This has provided us with a more differentiated picture. For example, we found some very successful interventions in difficult contexts (e.g. Yemen) and good practices in areas (e.g. marketing) that worked well in the context of a specific set of interventions. Our review, however, concurs on some aspects of the performance picture presented here, for example that integrated approaches that cover a range of interventions and are well-targeted seem to be more likely to support successful GEWE practices (see chapter VI).

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<sup>30</sup> This includes CPEs, PPAs, impact evaluations and PCRVs.

<sup>31</sup> No projects were rated highly unsatisfactory (1) in the same time frame.

Figure 2  
IOE GEWE ratings (2011 – 2015) (1= lowest - 6= highest)



Source: Compiled from IOE external ratings database.

**Key points**

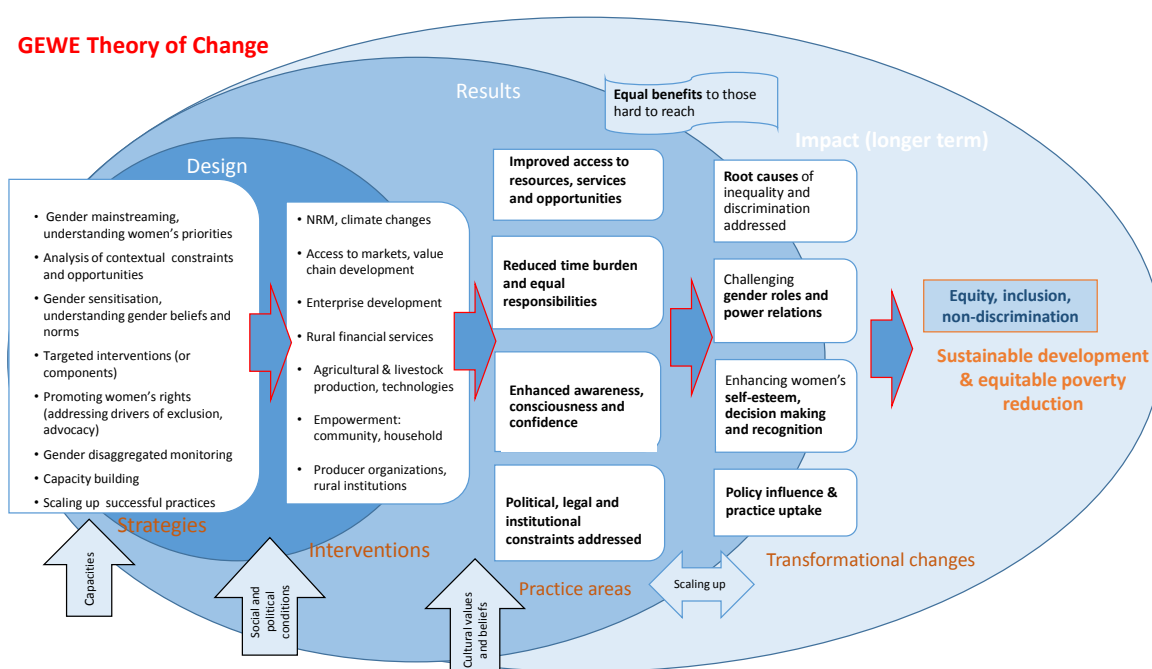
- The IFAD Policy on Gender Equality and Women's (2012) covers both the business of IFAD (the loans and grants portfolio, knowledge management, communication and capacity-building) as well as promoting gender equality within the organization (including staffing and financial resources).
- The Policy has three objectives: economic empowerment, equal voice and influence; and equitable balance in workloads and in the sharing of economic and social benefits between women and men.
- The GEWE Policy MTR highlighted the paucity of evidence from the field, which hinders IFAD's capacity to scale up and innovate good practices through more systematic learning about gender equality outcomes and impact and how they are achieved.
- The IFAD Strategic Framework (2016-2025) envisages IFAD consolidating its leading position on innovative gender practices by moving beyond mainstreaming and scaling up to achieving gender-transformative impacts.

## IV. Analytical framework

### A. IFAD's theory of change on gender equality and women's empowerment

76. The synthesis provides a conceptual framework that will help identify practices that have delivered GEWE results, in particular those that are transformative and have potential for scaling up. GEWE results, according to the IFAD Gender Policy, are economic empowerment, equal voice and influence, and equitable benefits. Agenda 2030 has considerably increased the attention to gender and puts women at the centre of development. The Agenda calls for more ambitious transformative change,<sup>32</sup> which requires addressing root causes of inequality, exclusion and discrimination.
77. The conceptual framework for this synthesis is captured in a ToC, presenting the pathway towards GEWE. It illustrates a set of pathways (the broad arrows from left to right), rather than one path through which transformational change can and possibly has been achieved. The ToC presented here is for the evaluation of a broad set of programmes, or rather summarizing those evaluations, thus illustrating the diversity of interventions that may have an impact on GEWE.

Figure 3



78. On the right side, the ToC highlights the ultimate GEWE impact. This is an integral part of sustainable development and equitable poverty reduction, and is IFAD's Strategic Framework Goal.<sup>33</sup> It expands the description, to highlight the more ambitious and transformative nature of the Agenda 2030 goals:
- Equity, which focuses on the conditions of access to assets and opportunities;
  - Inclusion, highlighting the multidimensional and 'deeper' nature of constraints women face; and

<sup>32</sup> See IFAD, "Leaving No One Behind." Living up to the 2030 Agenda.

<sup>33</sup> IFAD's Strategic Framework Goal is to enable "poor rural women and men to improve their food security and nutrition, raise their incomes and strengthen their resilience" (from: IFAD Gender Policy).

- Non-discrimination, which describes individuals or (usually) groups being denied opportunities and access.
79. As is common in a ToC, the impact on the right of the diagram is not measurable, or expected to be measured within the scope of projects or interventions; measurable change is found to the left of the ToC. The pathways indicate there is a likely (reasonable) impact from the interventions to the ultimate goal.
  80. GEWE contributes to the ultimate impact in two ways, each considered transformational in the sense of Agenda 2030. First, the 'no one left behind' agenda is articulated as providing equal benefits to those hardest to reach: this means reaching women, but also the most marginalized of women, as women do not form a homogenous group, and gender needs to be specific to context, location, ethnicity, etc. This can be through women-specific interventions or components and/or gender mainstreaming, making the reduction of gender inequalities "an integral part of the organization's strategy, policies and operations".<sup>34</sup>
  81. Second, a transformational agenda is not just about benefits to poor women, but is also about addressing the economic, political and cultural barriers of gender inequality. The latter is harder to measure and monitor, and typically requires a deeper analysis of underlying structures and norms of exclusion and discrimination, and often more in-depth gender training of programme and monitoring staff.
  82. These changes are expected to be achieved through measurable changes (stated GEWE results) in four areas: improved access to resources and opportunities; more equal work burden and reduced time poverty of women; increased decision-making power at various levels; and changes in norms and values around gender equality.<sup>35</sup> It is expected that these dimensions (of empowerment) are likely to interact and be inter-dependent. Project results typically do not exist or are not recorded in all areas; in fact, most of the evidence of project results is, as one would expect, in the sphere of access to resources, while evidence from elsewhere highlights, in particular, the need to address women's time burden and constraints simultaneously.
  83. The set of interventions describes elements of the various projects and components of projects; these are elaborated below. The strategies on the left of the ToC describe the various approaches and instruments put in place by IFAD within the various programmes and projects (in line with the policy action areas in the IFAD Gender Policy). This highlights the importance of both gender mainstreaming, and targeted interventions (through projects or project components). It also notes the importance of training staff at various levels, particularly to ensure sensitivity to possible underlying gender discrimination. Society-wide gender constraints and women's rights are not necessarily addressed in projects, but awareness of these is important for successful GEWE interventions. Finally, the ToC stresses the need for monitoring instruments to be disaggregated by gender, as well as cross-cutting axes of exclusion, such as ethnicity, race and location.

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<sup>34</sup> IFAD Gender Policy.

<sup>35</sup> Three of these are direct reflections of the Strategic Objectives in the IFAD Gender Policy; social change (norms, status, confidence) is added here, as a key ingredient of transformative change.



**Definitions – practice and intervention**

- A **practice** is the customary, habitual, or expected way of doing something. As such, it describes the actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method, as opposed to a theory. In the context of this synthesis practice is, for example, providing literacy training to women.
- An **intervention** is an activity or a set of activities implemented to address a clearly defined objective. In this case literacy. An intervention usually involves a number of activities to achieve the objective. For example, also convincing men or building capacities of training providers. In the context of IFAD, an intervention can be a project, a component or a subcomponent.

**B. Typology of GEWE practices identified in the sample**

84. To enable generalization of findings and lesson learning, we classify GEWE practices with evidence in the 57 evaluation reports in four main areas. These are not exhaustive in terms of women's empowerment or gender equality, but focus on the key areas of IFAD's operations. Importantly, as gender equality and women's empowerment are multifaceted, interventions typically need to be multisectoral, and sometimes include components or activities affecting more than one of these areas.<sup>36</sup>
85. First, and the focus of much of IFAD's investment, is **access to resources, services and opportunities**. The most common interventions in the IFAD portfolio relate to providing rural financial services and enhancing income-generating activities (IGAs), including through technological improvements and access to productive assets. In many cases, the provision of financial and other services is combined with training for livelihood (and other) activities. Other interventions are focused on backyards to enhance food security, and access to markets and integration in value chains. Most of these interventions can be provided to households or communities in general, or targeted to women, and effects are likely to differ.
86. Reducing **time poverty** and more equal sharing of productive and reproductive responsibilities can be classified as a second area. The gender division of labour defines women's and men's gender-differentiated time-use patterns. These are affected by many factors, including practical issues, such as household composition, access to water and fuel, availability of infrastructure and distance to key economic and social services such as schools, health centres, financial institutions and markets, but also social and cultural norms.<sup>37</sup> In general, women's time investment in household responsibilities tends to be much greater than men's, and reducing this time burden can be a precondition to enhancing well-being and productivity.<sup>38</sup> We therefore identified this as a separate area, even though there is some overlap with the first area.
87. Third, in many cases, women's empowerment is hindered by political, legal and institutional constraints, including, for example, those that safeguard women's safety. It is important that interventions be cognizant of these constraints and the opportunities provided by reforms. Engagement with national institutions, from local levels upwards, is also important to enhance project sustainability and the possibilities for replication and lesson learning, and may ultimately contribute to **creating an enabling environment** for GEWE. Promoting women's participation in local institutions is a particularly important aspect of empowerment, and may lead to wider social change.

<sup>36</sup> For the detail, see annex IV with the classification of the 57 evaluation reports in these four areas.

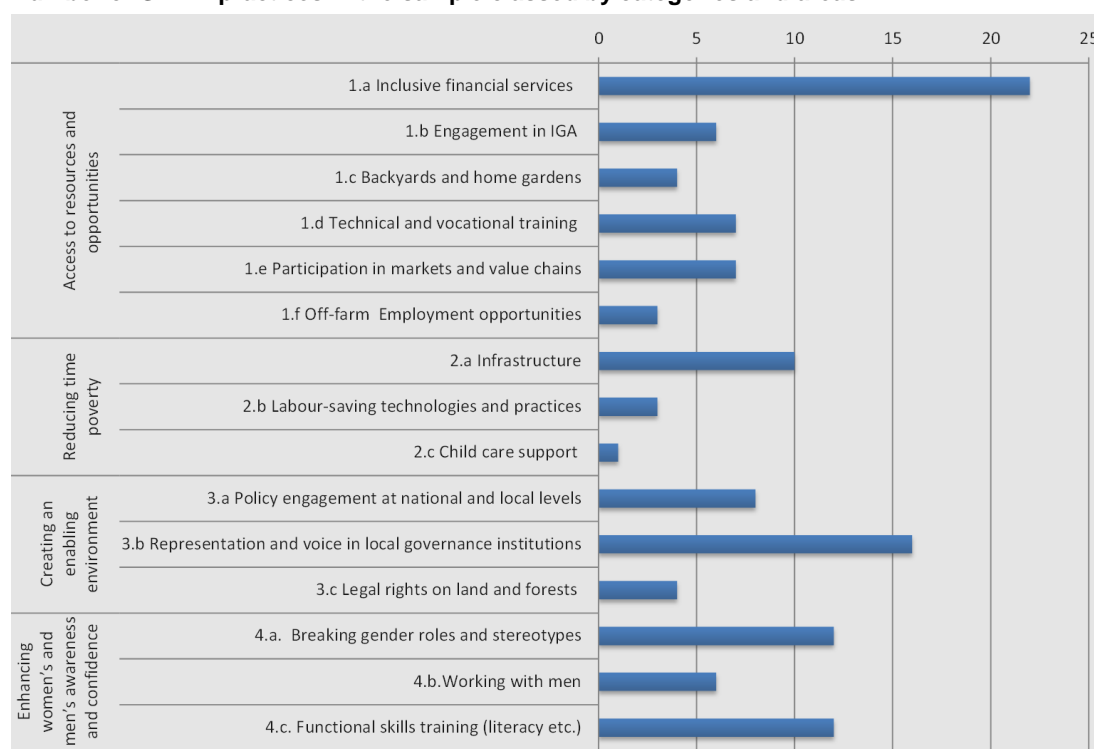
<sup>37</sup> See CM Blackden and Q. Wodon. 2006. Gender, Time Use, and Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. World Bank Working Paper No. 73.

<sup>38</sup> IFAD (2016) Reducing women's domestic workload through labour saving technologies and practices <https://www.ifad.org/topic/gender/overview>.

88. Fourth, there are close links between the economic and the cultural aspects of empowerment, particularly if viewed from a transformative perspective. These links go both ways: **enhancing women's and men's awareness, consciousness and confidence** – through community groups, trainings – can be important pre-conditions for project uptake (or indeed articulating priorities); and enhanced access to resources can, and should, enhance women's confidence and voice within households and communities to influence community development and take on traditionally male roles, therefore, advancing towards changing societal patterns.
89. Within the sample of 57 evaluations, the synthesis identified 121 GEWE practices. Based on the four main practice areas of the ToC, we classified them into the four main types. The largest practice area is around women's economic resources and opportunities. Other types of interventions, although fewer in number, are still critical for achieving GEWE results:
- Improving women's access to resources and opportunities (47 practices or 39 per cent);
  - Reducing women's time poverty (14 practices or 12 per cent);
  - Addressing political, legal and institutional constraints (29 practices or 24 per cent); and
  - Strengthening women's and men's awareness, consciousness and confidence (30 practices or 25 per cent).
90. The following chart provides an overview of the practice areas and the specific types of GEWE practices. The structure of this typology, as presented below, will guide the review of GEWE practices in the following chapter.

Figure 4

**Number of GEWE practices in the sample classed by categories and areas**



**Key points**

- The conceptual framework for this synthesis is captured in a theory of change (ToC), presenting pathways towards the ultimate GEWE impact, in line with the ambitious and transformative nature of the Agenda 2030 goals: equity, inclusion and non-discrimination.
- Presentation of GEWE outcomes and impacts in chapter V follows the ToC.
- To enable generalization of findings and lesson learning, we classify GEWE practices into four main areas: (i) access to resources and opportunities; (ii) reducing time poverty; (iii) creating an enabling environment; and (iv) enhancing women's and men's awareness, consciousness and confidence.
- Within the sample of 57 evaluations, the synthesis identified 121 GEWE practices, which will be reviewed in the following chapter.

## **V. Review of GEWE interventions and practices**

91. This chapter presents findings on GEWE practices according to the applicable evaluations criteria (relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability). The analysis will follow the structure of the impact pathways set out in the ToC (chapter IV). Aspects of GEWE intervention design are treated in the relevance section (A). The effectiveness section (B) reviews the extent to which GEWE interventions and practices have achieved the results set out in the ToC. The impact section (C) will present the evidence linking GEWE interventions with longer term transformational changes. The final section (D) will review the sustainability of the practices and changes.

### **A. Relevance**

92. This section reviews the relevance of GEWE interventions according the following criteria: (i) relevance within the country context; (ii) the extent to which COSOPs and project designs were aiming to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment; (iii) targeting strategies; and (iv) if the strategies used are "fit for purpose" under Agenda 2030. By "fit for purpose" we mean, for example, inclusive approaches that are appropriate for reaching out to those women who are very poor and hard to reach (see chapter II).

#### **(i) Alignment with global agendas (MDGs and SDGs)**

35. The interventions reviewed by this synthesis were designed under the MDG Agenda which recognized that meaningful and sustainable reductions in poverty levels will require women's equal participation and empowerment. Women's exclusion from education, equal benefits, health and social services, and from full participation in employment and markets were major themes under MDG1 to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, and were well-addressed in the review sample. Supporting women's equal access to resources, which is a prerequisite for women to overcome issues of poverty and also an IFAD GEWE policy goal, constitute the majority (39 per cent) of practices in the interventions reviewed. Other highly relevant practices include women's representation and voice in local governance institutions (MDG3), which is explicitly addressed in 14 per cent of the reviewed interventions.
93. On the SDG Agenda, the synthesis found that, overall, the projects included in the sample well reflect the underlying principles of non-discrimination and inclusion, because they are aligned with IFAD's corporate commitments to poverty reduction, gender equality and women's empowerment, they are relevant in particular for SDG1 and SDG5.
94. A number of cases included in the sample are aligned with SDG5. They contributed to 'ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life' and supported 'reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources in accordance with national laws'.<sup>39</sup> Other interventions did not directly align with SDG5 on GEWE but resonated with other SDGs, in particular with SDG1.<sup>40</sup>
95. The interventions reviewed included, on average, more than two practices on GEWE which are relevant to the SDGs. Practices to improve women's access to resources and opportunities are relevant for SDG1 and SDG2. Both SDGs highlight equal access to economic resources, services and opportunities. Within the review sample, inclusive financial services were most common (found in 39 per cent of the interventions). Promoting women's participation in IGAs, as well as in marketing and value chains are also highly relevant, but were found in only a small number of

<sup>39</sup> e.g. India #18 and #46; Brazil #43; Burkina Faso #44; Ghana #30; India #18, #47, #46; Uganda #14; Viet Nam #37; Yemen #38; Zambia #55; Mongolia #19; Rwanda #52.

<sup>40</sup> e.g. Chad #2; Jordan #10; Ghana #8; Guatemala #31; Niger #49; Sudan #34; Syria #13.

interventions (11 and 12 per cent respectively). Provision of technical and vocational training specifically for women, which is also highly relevant for SDG4 (“inclusive and equitable quality education and life-long learning opportunities”), was found in an equally small number of the sampled intervention (12 per cent). Backyard gardens are a very relevant intervention for SDG2 targets on food availability and nutrition (2.1 and 2.2), and thus implicitly also relevant for SDG3 on health, but were few in the sample (7 per cent). Least common among the sampled interventions are those supporting off-farm employment opportunities for women (4 per cent), which is also relevant for some targets under SDG8 (e.g. 8.5 and 8.10) – to “promote sustained inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”.

96. Practices to reduce time poverty are relevant for several SDGs (SDG5, SDG6 and SDG7), yet they were not well-integrated into the sampled interventions. Most common is the provision of general infrastructure, such as water and sanitation (SDG6) and energy (SDG7), which helps to reduce women’s workloads. Related practices were found in 18 per cent of the sampled interventions. Labour-saving technologies were only part of three interventions (5 per cent), and childcare support was only provided by one intervention (2 per cent).
97. Practices to create an enabling environment for women are relevant for SDG5 and SDG 10: “reduce inequality within and among countries” (in particular target 10.3 on discriminatory laws, policies and practices) and SDG16 on peaceful and inclusive societies (in particular targets 16.6 on effective, accountable and transparent institutions and target 16.7 on responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels). These are common activities in IFAD’s interventions (30 per cent). Policy engagement on gender equality issues was only recorded in 14 per cent of the interventions reviewed. Interventions addressing issues of equal rights on land and forests only occurred in seven per cent of the interventions.
98. Practices to strengthen women’s and men’s awareness and confidence on GEWE address issues of discrimination and exclusion across many SDGs, but are particularly relevant to SDG5, SDG8, SDG9, SDG10 and SDG16. They were more common in the sample. Practices to break gender roles and stereotypes, as well as functional skills training, were recorded in 21 per cent of the interventions. Still less common were practices to specifically work with men (11 per cent).
99. To conclude, with the high number of practices supporting women’s access to resources and opportunities, the interventions are generally well aligned with SDG5 on GEWE and SDG1 and SDG2 on poverty reduction and sustainable agriculture, although practices to improve food security and nutrition for women are not well-represented in the reviewed sample. The relatively large number of interventions providing training for women is relevant for SDG4 on education and life-long learning, but more could be done to target vocational skills training to women. Other SDGs that are relevant for rural women include SDG3, SDG6, SDG7, SDG8 and SDG9, but are less frequently addressed by the interventions covered in the sample. Practices to enhance women’s and men’s awareness and confidence on GEWE are highly relevant to SDG10 and 16 and are more common in the sample.

## **(ii) Addressing contextual constraints**

100. Understanding the country context is important in several ways. Above all it is important in identifying the key cultural and socio-economic constraints that women face, as well as the potential agents of change that can help to address these constraints from the outset and integrate them into project design. An adaptive strategy is needed to develop and adjust interventions in response to the challenges and opportunities arising from the context. Finally, a good understanding of the context is essential to establishing if and to what extent changes of a transformative nature have taken place. What may be transformative

in one context, for example women taking up IGAs in Yemen, may be the norm in another context, for example in Uganda.

101. There are a several global indices that compile annual reports on key GEWE indicators at country level, which provide a useful entry point into context analysis. The Gender Development Index is commonly used in IFAD. The Global Gap Index and the Social Institutions Gender Index cover relevant indicators to measure aspects of gender inequality, and their annual reports cover a large number of countries. The main limitation is that they do not distinguish between urban and rural women. The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) specifically aims to monitor gender inequality in the agricultural sector, but so far only has only be piloted in a few countries.

Box 4

#### Relevant global GEWE indices

**The Global Gender Gap Index**, prepared by the World Economic Forum, quantifies the magnitude of gender disparities and tracks their progress over time, with a specific focus on the relative gaps between women and men across four key areas: health, education, economy and politics.

<http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016>

**The Social Institutions and Gender Index**, prepared by the Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, covers five dimensions of discriminatory social institutions, spanning major socio-economic areas that affect women's lives: discriminatory family code, restricted physical integrity, son bias, restricted resources and assets, and restricted civil liberties.

<http://www.genderindex.org/>

**The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)** measures the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agricultural sector. The WEAI can also be used more generally to assess the state of empowerment and gender parity in agriculture, to identify key areas in which empowerment needs to be strengthened, and to track progress over time.

<http://www.ifpri.org/publication/women%E2%80%99s-empowerment-agriculture-index>

**The Gender Development Index** measures gender gaps in human development achievements by accounting for disparities between women and men in three basic dimensions of human development - health, knowledge and living standards using the same component indicators as in the Human Development Index. The Gender Development Index shows how much women are lagging behind their male counterparts and how much women need to catch up within each dimension of human development. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-development-index-gdi>

102. The WEAI baseline report covered thirteen countries.<sup>41</sup> Among women in agriculture, the greatest constraints to empowerment are access to and decisions on credit, workload, and group membership. The importance of these constraints, however, varies between regions. In Asia, group membership is the primary constraint for women, while access to and decisions on credit and workload are more severe constraints in East and Southern Africa, respectively. For men, group membership also emerges as the dominant constraint in Asia, while workload is the major constraint in both East and Southern Africa.<sup>42</sup> The GEWE practices covered by the review sample respond to some of the key constraints highlighted in the WEIA. For example, almost 39 per cent of the interventions addressed access to rural financial services. High workloads were addressed to a lesser extent, as explained above. Also relevant for the WEIA are interventions aimed at strengthening women's leadership, for example by strengthening women's

<sup>41</sup> The report showed large differences in scores: The highest (0.98) for Cambodia, the lowest (0.66) for Bangladesh. The maximum for a WEIA score is 1=100% for all indicators.

<sup>42</sup> [https://feedthefuture.gov/sites/default/files/resource/files/ftf\\_progress\\_weai\\_baselinereport\\_may2014.pdf](https://feedthefuture.gov/sites/default/files/resource/files/ftf_progress_weai_baselinereport_may2014.pdf).

representation in local governance institutions and women's voice in the public sphere.

103. The synthesis highlights a few cases where projects explicitly addressed the factors reinforcing gender inequality and discrimination within a specific country context. For example, in Ghana (#30) major factors for sustained gender inequality, according to the Social Institutions and Gender Index (2016), include the absence of social protection mechanisms for women. IFAD's country programme helped poor women to cope with the economic downturn through self-employment and wage employment at the community level. In other cases in sub-Saharan Africa, projects did not attempt to address the key drivers of exclusion, discrimination and unequal power relations. These include the application of some discriminatory cultural practices and beliefs, deficits in gender-specific laws and policies, as well as a failure to implement such laws and policies, e.g. in Burkina Faso (#44). In the far greater number of cases though, it is not clear as to how the interventions had addressed key contextual factors and GEWE constraints.

### **(iii) Alignment with IFAD GEWE policy**

104. The high number of GEWE practices found in the review sample provides a clear indication that IFAD's GEWE policy has been widely implemented, albeit with some variation. Women's access to economic resources and opportunities was emphasized in the objectives of the GPoA (2003) and the IFAD GEWE Policy (2012), and the large number of related practices illustrates that these were well implemented. Adherence to policy objectives on enhancing women's decision-making role (GPoA) and women's voice and influence in rural institutions and organizations (GEWE Policy) also explains the attention to related practices on women's representation and voice. The third objective, balancing workloads and sharing benefits, has been less frequently addressed, as already explained above.
105. **COSOP objectives.** The review of the evaluation sample found that gender is often integrated into COSOPs in some form or another. In six COSOPs (out of 13), gender was included in one or more COSOP objectives, or considered as a cross-cutting issue to be mainstreamed across the portfolio.<sup>43</sup> However, this does not necessarily mean that these commitments were consistently implemented. For example, the Ecuador CPE (#29) found that although the COSOP and projects were explicitly aiming to address GEWE issues, this was not followed through with concrete and implementable goals and objectives.
106. **Project objectives.** In the sample of 44 project evaluations (PPAs, PCRVs, impact evaluations), gender was integrated in the general objective or purpose of the project in eight cases. In six it was partially included, and in the remaining cases gender was not mentioned in the general objective. Examples of the former include a project in Yemen (#39) that emphasized "women's role in empowering communities to gain direct benefit from development planning and project execution", a project in Guatemala (#31) that included "to create favourable conditions and opportunities for rural women to develop IGAs which can be sustainable and market-oriented" as a specific objective. Also, in some cases, while gender was not included in the specific objective, it was part of the specific components of the project and, therefore, built into the design. This was the case in Mongolia (#19) where one of five components was on social development, including women in development, education and health. In other cases, such as Chad (#1), there was a clear GEWE objective, but no corresponding GEWE strategy to operationalize it.
107. **Targets for reaching women.** Most of the sample projects did not include specific targets. Where there were targets, they mainly focused on the number of women to be reached, and the figures varied from 15 per cent to 70 per cent. Seventeen cases (out of 57) included clear gender-specific targets, for example a

<sup>43</sup> e.g. CPE Viet Nam (#15), CPE China (#28), CPE Nepal (#20), CPE Rwanda (#12), CPE Bolivia (#42).



minimum percentage of women beneficiaries or special focus on women and youth or women-headed households.<sup>44</sup> In other cases, the evaluations found that although women were not directly targeted, they still constituted the majority of beneficiaries. For example, in Mozambique (#48), in Uganda (#14), and in Sri Lanka (#22).

#### **(iv) Strategies for targeting women**

108. IFAD uses two types of strategy for targeting women: firstly, to ensure that women benefit equally from project interventions; and secondly, to specifically target women through women-only activities. Both strategies are common and the choice depends on the context and the intervention. Some projects also combine both strategies for different types of interventions, if deemed necessary within a given context.<sup>45</sup>
109. **Targeting through general benefits.** Targeting women through inclusive strategies that aim at equal participation in general benefits has advantages in certain contexts. For example, in situations where issues of social and economic marginalization are closely inter-linked, targeting of poor women through comprehensive development strategies may be required. This was the case, for example, in tackling poverty among indigenous communities in Viet Nam (#4). The project strategy was to enhance women's role in decision-making and economic activities to improve their access to and control over productive resources, thereby ensuring equal opportunities in social and economic development. The approach cut across all component activities, including credit, production, training, infrastructure and project management.<sup>46</sup> Participatory project design and social mobilization during the early phase of implementation are critical to enable women to express their needs. This process is, however, rarely described in detail, and it is not a given that women would automatically have been included. Specific strategies are needed to include poor women and ethnic minority women in decision-making and project activities (e.g. in Viet Nam #4). The review sample provides strong examples of highly participatory and inclusive community-driven development approaches that have enabled women to benefit in large numbers (e.g. Chad #1, Brazil #43).
110. **Specific targeting.** In other cases, project strategies included tailored services for women. In Sri Lanka (#53) the successful rural finance component included the support of the Women's Bank and the Visma Plus cooperatives. In Zambia (#40) the project targeted women through short-term loans with repayment periods being spread over regular reimbursement cycles, so as to allow the borrowers to access funding according to their needs. In some conservative environments, such as Yemen (#39), the project established women-only committees to enable them to address their priorities. The project also applied positive discrimination in many activities.
111. **Unsuccessful targeting.** The evaluations provide little detail on how targeting went wrong or failed to reach women in significant numbers in certain activities. For example, competitive mechanisms to select beneficiary households seem to have worked in some projects (e.g. Plurinational State of Bolivia #27) but not in others, because they excluded poorer households and women (e.g. Brazil #43). A common issue seems to be that, too often, projects relied on general distributional effects benefits to reach women. For example, in the Republic of Moldova (#11), the project relied on a 'trickle-down' effect from rural enterprise development,

<sup>44</sup> Examples include #56, #27, #43, #17, #2, #1, #57, #45, #30, #47, #18, #19, #50, #21, #34, #40.

<sup>45</sup> Within the sample of 44 project evaluations (PPAs, PCRVs, impact evaluations), 13 projects targeted women through mainstreaming gender in project activities, 16 projects targeted women through specific activities and 8 projects used a combination of both.

<sup>46</sup> A similar case is Bhutan (#26) where provision of basic infrastructure addressed geographic isolation as a root cause of poverty and marginalization and gender mainstreaming in activities such as extension support and technical training addressed women's exclusion from knowledge and service provision.

which in the end failed to generate significant employment benefits for women. Geographic targeting used in IFAD's integrated rural development projects in some cases also failed to reach women, if they were not specifically targeted or motivated to participate e.g. Jordan (#10) and Bhutan (#26).

#### **(v) Groups likely to be left behind**

112. There are a number of positive examples where IFAD has targeted specific groups of women that were identified as vulnerable or excluded. For example, indigenous women in Ecuador (#29) and in Panama (#21), tribal women in India (#47), marginalized women and women-headed household in the Indian Himalayas (#46), widows in Uganda (#36) and Rwanda (#12) or destitute women (landless women, divorced or separated women, female-headed households) in Bangladesh (#41). In Ghana (#7), the intervention targeted disabled women and those labelled as 'witches'.
113. In particular, IFAD's focus on indigenous women and female-headed households is generally good, although there are also a number of cases where vulnerable or marginal groups of women were left behind. The following paragraphs identify groups of women that are typically at risk of being excluded and who require targeted support in order to benefit equally.
114. **Landless women.** Landless people are at risk of being excluded from IFAD projects because many of the activities are land-based, or require land as a precondition to benefit. Women are generally disadvantaged because they are excluded from land ownership or own little land. The evaluations report a number of cases where women were not able to access services and benefits because of issues related to land ownership. In other cases, the fact that women tend to own less land than men was not considered in the design of activities, for example in Cambodia (#17) and Rwanda (#52).
115. **Female-headed households** and households with absent household heads (e.g. migrants) are a special group of women confronted with different types of challenges that are sometimes not well understood and addressed. The absence of men may open up opportunities for women to occupy new roles and spaces. In Nepal (#20) it was noted that the gap left by men may have helped to enhance women's voice and influence in community groups. Though not discussed in the evaluations, it remains a question how sustainable GEWE results are when male migrants return. At the same time, women's workload and resulting time poverty may increase due to the absence of working-age men, as noted in the Plurinational State of Bolivia (#27).
116. **Single women and widows** tend to be less visible or active in the community and are at risk of being excluded, as highlighted in some evaluations. For example, in the post-tsunami rehabilitation programme in Sri Lanka (#53), widows and women abandoned by their husbands were often excluded because they did not have legal proof of house ownership or marriage certificates, and were thus not able to access housing benefits. In the context of the intervention in Mongolia (#19), single women, who constituted 15 per cent of the target households, were identified as very vulnerable at design, but their participation as a group was not tracked during implementation and there is no evidence that they actually benefited.
117. **Young women and elderly women** face multiple disadvantages not only as a result of their age, but also their gender. Poor access to land, credit and markets, is compounded by traditional attitudes about their roles in their families and society which tend to be strong in rural areas and can consign them to a lifetime of drudgery and servitude.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup> IOE Evaluation Synthesis on Youth. 2014. <https://www.ifad.org/documents/10180/67ae896a-ca03-49be-a3a0-efaed4a78987>.

### **(vi) Overall relevance**

118. Overall, our review found that guidance by IFAD's corporate GEWE Plan of Action and policy was important in ensuring that interventions were relevant and address key GEWE issues. IFAD's attention to key constraints highlighted by global gender indices, such as lack of access to rural financial services, time poverty and exclusion from group participation is highly relevant, also in the context of Agenda 2030. The interventions reviewed were generally well aligned with SDG5 on GEWE and SDG1 and SDG2, which are closely aligned to IFAD's mandate on agriculture and rural poverty reduction. Other SDGs that are also relevant for rural women were less frequently addressed. The interventions reviewed were also found to be in line with IFAD GEWE policy objectives, although the objective of balancing workloads was insufficiently addressed.
119. In terms of aligning interventions with women's priorities, the main assumption underlying most targeting strategies was that women are able to benefit through a participatory planning and implementation approach. To some extent, participatory processes are instrumental in addressing women's needs, and women often do benefit proportionally, even when not targeted. Nevertheless, explicit consideration of specific women's needs is important and specific targeting strategies are relevant. There is also scope to better address the diversity of women (ethnic, religious, life cycle) and their needs, and to ensure that generally-held beliefs are critically assessed for inclusive poverty reduction.

## **B. Effectiveness**

120. This review of effectiveness follows the four practice areas identified in the ToC (chapter IV). Within each area we review the specific practices as outlined in the typology of GEWE practices (figure 4). The final section presents GEWE interventions that were highly effective.

### **(i) Access to resources and opportunities**

121. IFAD-supported interventions include a range of practices to improve women's access to economic resources and opportunities, often used in combination for effective results. Rural finance is the most common practice, but promotion of IGAs, access to markets and technical training are equally important and often combined.
122. **Inclusive financial services.** Practices to promote women's access to rural finance are the most common and are highly relevant. The review of effectiveness within the sampled intervention, however, provides a mixed picture with regards to ensuring that women can access and make good use of the services available.
123. The synthesis found that the large number of women beneficiaries reported did not result from deliberate targeting, but rather from self-targeting or other factors, such as in Pakistan (#51),<sup>48</sup> Niger (#49) and Azerbaijan (#16).<sup>49</sup> There are a few good practices where lowering the threshold has enabled women to access loans, for example in Zambia (#55) and in Mozambique (#48). Here savings and credit associations provided a first point of entry for financial services for women. In Haiti (#9), IFAD has supported the savings banks and credit union and credit groups that helped especially women (60 per cent) by reducing costs and required paperwork. In other cases, targeting of mainstreaming financial institutions discriminated against those that were mainly dealing with women, as reported from Ghana (#8).

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<sup>48</sup> The Programme for Increasing Sustainable Microfinance (PRISM) in Pakistan (#51) reported that credit outreach to women overachieved its target (female/male lending ratio 75 per cent of clients with target 50 per cent), women earned more from their credit investments and IGAs (value chains of embroidery, poultry, etc.). The Community Development Programme, also in Pakistan (#50) found that almost equal numbers of men and women benefitted from micro finance, including buying cows and buffalo through the Community Development Fund.

<sup>49</sup> Gendered demand analysis for rural finance was highlighted as a good practice in the ToC workshop.

124. Out of the 22 rural finance cases reviewed in the sample, only four targeted women's only providers (#3, #4, #29, #46).<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, the use of women social mobilizers (#18, #47) or pairs of male and female mobilizers (#50) seems to have worked well. The use of women's groups for microcredit was also effective in Bangladesh (#25). It has enabled women to increase assets in the form of savings with MFIs and banks among other benefits.
125. Without evidence of how women use credit, it is difficult to establish the effectiveness of those interventions and few projects monitor the use of credit. For example, in Bhutan (#26), 44 per cent of loans were used for productive purposes (mostly livestock), with the remainder for housing and other expenditures, but the use of loans by women beneficiaries remains unclear. Even for the positive example of Bangladesh (#25), it is unclear how women participating in microcredit groups used their loans. The PPA notes that while women were effectively targeted, more could have been done to focus on the qualitative aspects of women's participation in equal benefits, such as developing IGAs that would enable very poor and often landless women to build assets together with necessary training and larger loans on par with men (p. 25).
126. At the same time, women clearly benefited from the organizational activities that often accompanied the provision of rural financial services. For example, the India National Micro Finance Support Programme (#18) showed good results of the self-help groups model, organizing 20 women into groups, and linking them to banks. This was accompanied by sensitization of MFIs on gender and micro finance. Some MFIs put in place a social mobilizer in addition to finance specialist, and this was seen to promote the process of empowerment. These activities have often helped women to build their social capital, for example by strengthening their mutual bonds as well as links with local banks.<sup>51</sup>
127. **Engagement in IGAs.** A number of projects promoted IGAs, in some cases linked to the provision of loans, but in others without a credit scheme, a smaller number of cases also benefited women. In Niger (#49), women greatly benefited from micro-projects promoting income generation (63 per cent), in particular animal restocking and more efficient methods for the extraction of groundnut oil. In Uganda (#35), women constituted 30 per cent of the beneficiaries from interventions promoting sunflower, soybean, groundnut and sesame crops for oil production and processing. The activities were quite significant in that they reportedly triggered further economic changes, for example the emergence of new enterprises (i.e. bee-keeping, poultry, piggery) and women's group formation and collective action, e.g. building common assets, marketing outlets and savings and credit accounts.
128. **Backyard gardens** are an effective way to enhance women's role in household food production and income generation. There are only few, but apparently successful cases where backyard gardens have contributed to income generation and improved household nutrition, for example in Brazil (#43).<sup>52</sup> This intervention provided water tanks, which enabled the production of vegetables throughout the year. The involvement of women in these activities is also linked to improving the participation, voice and influence of women in society, especially through the recognition of their role as economic agents.
129. **Participation in marketing and value chains.** Practices to promote women's participation in marketing and value chains are not yet common, although there is some good evidence that they can be highly effective in empowering women. Some projects, like the Vegetable Oil Development Project in Uganda (#35) and the fair

<sup>50</sup> In Kenya (#3) the Kenya Women's Finance Trust supported women's access to rural financial services for on and off-farm IGAs. Good results were also found in Viet Nam (#4) with the use of women-only savings and credit groups and in Ecuador with mutual interest funds for indigenous women's groups (#29).

<sup>51</sup> Reported for example by the impact evaluation in Sri Lanka (#22).

<sup>52</sup> In Sri Lanka home gardens were supported as part of the post-tsunami interventions (#23, #53).

trade coffee farmer producers' cooperatives in Rwanda (#12) have been very effective in linking women produces to markets. Another example is the Ghana Root and Tuber Improvement and Marketing Programme (#7), which promoted 'Good Practice Centres' – particularly for women and youth – for upgrading of small-scale processing, business and marketing skills, in order to become part of supply chains. The evaluation found that nearly one third of the women reported that the centres had helped them expand their businesses, and over half stated they were able to apply what they had learned. The evaluation also showed considerable increases in production, in both quality and quantity. Another example is the Livelihoods Improvement Project in the Himalayas (India #46), which focused on turmeric cultivation and marketing and successfully reduced the role of middlemen.

130. **Off-farm employment.** Good practices on supporting sustainable and equitable wage employment are still rare because women face multiple constraints. They are particularly promising for the most marginalized (those with little land, or non-herder households), but evaluations also noted that the new IGAs have significantly added to women's workloads. In Bangladesh (#41), unskilled infrastructure earthworks were carried out by disadvantaged rural people, including poor women, treated as contractors. According to the evaluation, the benefits were significant, with reported increases of average monthly income, average monthly expenditure, ownership of houses or assets, and ownership of livestock. In the Syrian Arab Republic (#13), the intervention targeted women from non-herder households and mainly benefited women without time constraints, such as young unmarried women or those with older children. Other women were more reluctant to take up opportunities because of their existing high workloads.
131. **Technical and vocational training.** Many of the activities mentioned above included training activities.<sup>53</sup> Some evaluations expressed concerns that these trainings tended to confirm women's conventional roles and tasks and could have better addressed their preferences and needs within a given situation (#25). Other evaluations stressed the broad benefits women derived from training.<sup>54</sup> Sometimes, outreach to women has been difficult. A good practice has thus been to encourage and include women as trainers and extension workers. For example, the project in Yemen (#39) trained women to become animal health village extension workers, which was highly successful, because animals were mostly looked after by women.<sup>55</sup>

## **(ii) Reducing time poverty**

132. **Domestic workload** is one of the most persistent hindrances preventing women from developing on- and off-farm economic activities, influencing decision-making at home, in the community and in institutions. Women work longer hours than men every day, when both paid and unpaid work are taken into account. This is primarily due to the fact that women spend two to ten times longer on unpaid domestic work than men. Some of the evidence suggests that freeing up women's time is a key aspect in addressing the root causes of inequalities. This can lead to engaging in IGAs, as well as decision-making platforms, and as mentioned earlier, has been associated with the improved health of women, girls and family members in the household.
133. In rural areas, domestic chores can include water and fuel collection, food processing and preparation, travelling, and transporting and caring for children, the ill and the elderly. These chores are particularly burdensome where there is no or limited access to essential public services and labour-saving technologies. Labour-

<sup>53</sup> Also in #7, #45, #12, #52, #21, #5; #43, #6.

<sup>54</sup> For example, the ability to spend time on training and visits, as well as running enterprises was considered as proof of the expanding autonomy of women (Bangladesh, #25). Evaluations also linked the participation of women in training courses and employment opportunities with trainees social awareness and self-confidence (Syria, #13).

<sup>55</sup> Also in the Plurinational State of Bolivia (#27) women were trained to offer private technical assistance services and as animal health extension workers.

saving technologies and practices, ranging from large-scale infrastructure investments in water, energy and roads, to medium-scale machinery and small-scale equipment for use at home and/or in group-based activities, are therefore important, but not yet common.<sup>56</sup>

#### Box 5

#### The India Livelihoods Improvement Project for the Himalayas

The 2015 evaluation of the India Livelihoods Improvement Project for the Himalayas (#46) found that drudgery-reduction interventions reduced the time spent by women on household chores by five hours a day, through motorized wheat threshers (reducing threshing time by 96 per cent), Napier grass production (reducing women's time spent collecting fodder by 60 per cent) and the improved water pitcher (reduced water-collection time by 30 per cent). But the evaluation also observed that the ergonomically designed agricultural tools were not appropriate to Indian women's height, in particular in Meghalaya. Furthermore, women farmers with disabilities may also require tailor-made tools.

134. **Labour-saving technologies and practices** include ergonomically designed agricultural tools, like lightweight pitchers for drinking-water collection, fodder production, improved fire wood sources and a range of improved agricultural and post-harvest implements, like rice mills (India #46). The evaluation in Bhutan (#26) also reports the positive effect of the introduction of labour-saving equipment (i.e. oil expellers, rice and maize crushers and threshers) in reducing drudgery.
135. **Infrastructure.** General and non-targeted provision of infrastructure can also have positive effects on women's workloads. The project in Bhutan (#26), increased road access benefited women because of shorter distances to markets, health clinics and schools, and general relief from carrying loads for infrastructure work. In Ghana (#7) and Kenya (#3), infrastructure interventions, such as the construction of bore wells and water storage tanks, were associated with a decrease of women's time and effort burden in their daily activities. In Sri Lanka (#23), the construction of new houses and the rehabilitation of others, the provision of housing amenities, drinking water, electricity, roads and drainage were all reported to ease women's workload.
136. **Childcare support** was provided by only one intervention. In this case it was effective in reducing women's workload, thus enabling them to take up non-household activities. In Mongolia (#19), the poverty reduction programme set up mobile kindergartens for children aged two to seven, which enabled herder families to stay together. The intervention has been scaled up and served more than 29,000 families since its start in 2004.

#### (iii) Creating an enabling environment

137. As highlighted earlier, GEWE is also hampered by legal constraints and discrimination in many countries (see section IV A). A small number of interventions set out to create a more enabling environment for GEWE.
138. **Legal rights on land and forests.** Interventions to secure women's legal rights on land and forest resources were few, but highly effective. In Viet Nam (#4), the Rural Income Diversification Project established joint forest land use certificates (FLUCs), which addressed the poorly protected rights for women and helped formally recognize ownership.<sup>57</sup> In Ethiopia (#56), the intervention also addressed access to land and secure land rights through land certification. The scheme included both joint ownership by women and their husbands, and single ownership for female-led households. The evaluation concludes that land certification has

<sup>56</sup> Adapted from the IFAD blog on Labour-saving technologies: freeing, Jeanette Cooke, 2016.

<sup>57</sup> Whether FLUCs actually changed the degree of women's access to and control over those resources is not discussed in the evaluation.

increased people's security of tenure and confidence to invest, and as a result improved household income sources and assets, as well as reducing over-exploitation and land degradation.

139. **Representation and voice in local governance.** Collaboration with local governance institutions to promote representation of women is common, as one might expect, given IFAD's focus on participation and local governance. This ranges from community development committees (#38, #5, #34, #47), other community and local support organizations (#50), community programme support teams (#37) and community leadership boards (#15). The interventions take different forms: some projects support women-only committees to promote women taking part on an equal footing with men in decision-making and to allow them to articulate their needs and interests (#38, #34), while others promoted mixed groups (#47). In other cases, the GEWE interventions targeted the increase of women's participation in committees related to production, such as cooperatives and grazing committees (#12).
140. While building the capacities of women's organizations is a common feature of programming, a number of the evaluations express doubts about the real levels of women's participation and decision-making power. For instance, the evaluation in Cambodia (#6) highlighted that women's participation was limited to mere physical presence in decision-making bodies. Their involvement in the actual decision-making process was limited, and their voices were often neither heard nor supported by either men or women, an attitude closely linked to the common perception shared by both genders that men have more knowledge and information, and are good in situation analyses.<sup>58</sup>
141. A similar observation was noted by the CPE in Ethiopia (#57), where women, despite many being members of water user associations, did not attend meetings for many reasons, including illiteracy, unfavourable public perceptions and domestic workloads. An earlier IOE synthesis report<sup>59</sup> concluded that one of the causes of lower participation of women in water user associations is related to the issue of multiple uses of water and is not adequately addressed by these institutions. Women, for instance, have clear preferences as to how an irrigation system should be operated (in terms of irrigation operations and scheduling of water deliveries) constrained as they are by home workload, childcare responsibilities and security concerns. Not addressing these concerns effectively disincentivizes them from actively participating in water user associations even when representation is statutory.
142. **Policy engagement at national and local levels.** An important dimension of IFAD's GEWE work is strategic policy dialogue with national development stakeholders. These range from local authorities to central governments and involve ongoing policy and multistakeholder processes and partnerships with civil society organizations, including advocacy campaigns to facilitate institutional change.<sup>60</sup> This type of engagement, although not yet common, is important to support an enabling policy, institutional and cultural environment in support of GEWE.<sup>61</sup> The evaluation in Cambodia (#17) highlighted the important institutional progress related to increased collaboration between the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries on the national decentralization policy and on efforts to address gender issues in agricultural activities. In countries which have strong mass organizations (e.g. Viet Nam, China), including those for women, these can be important partners in

<sup>58</sup> The ToC workshop also highlighted the lack of specific interventions to reinforce women's participation in decision-making as a gap.

<sup>59</sup> IOE Evaluation Synthesis on Water. 2014. <https://www.ifad.org/documents/10180/a9724299-432c-4518-929b-89f20a11c426>.

<sup>60</sup> From the IFAD GEWE scaling up note.

<sup>61</sup> See IFAD Scaling Up Note 2015.



implementing a GEWE strategy. In China (#28), IFAD partnered with the National Women's Federation and its subnational counterparts in implementing the COSOPs and some components of projects. However, while such national organizations may be powerful advocates of women's rights and interests, they often represent certain groups of women, for example small enterprise owners in rural China, and may not necessarily be suited to reach out to poorer marginalized women.<sup>62</sup>

**(iv) Enhancing women's and men's awareness and confidence**

143. Women's enhanced awareness and confidence is an important and integral part of women's empowerment, a common result of interventions focused on education and assets for example, and may also be a precondition of project success. These types of results are, however, difficult to observe and document. Therefore, most projects rely on output indications, such as numbers of participating women or numbers of women's organizations established or strengthened, as proxies for increased confidence and awareness.
144. The perceived increase in women's confidence and awareness is attributed to different types of practices. In particular, the creation of platforms and spaces for women at the local level (either through community development approaches or through rural finance interventions) is associated with enhanced confidence of women (#29, #41, #14, #27, #4, #5). Similarly, women's enhanced capacity to influence community development priorities is often interpreted as an expression of their improved self-awareness and confidence (Sudan #34, India #47, Viet Nam #37). In some cases, however, the evaluations were not able to corroborate those claims after field investigation, for instance in micro finance group meetings in India (#18). These changes cut across a number of practices that were described earlier, and often occurred as a positive side effect of those practices. In addition, there were some practices that specifically aimed at changing women's and men's awareness and confidence on gender norms and roles.
145. **Working with men.** Although this has not yet been a common strategy in the review sample, some projects realised that addressing gender inequalities also requires engaging with men. In Meghalaya, India (#46), the project investment in sensitizing men worked effectively and contributed to reducing inequalities between men and women and enhancing women's sense of self-worth and decision-making. In Uganda (#14), the sensitization and engagement of men was critical because they are the gatekeepers of customary practices limiting women's access to land and other productive resources. Creating awareness among them helped build a critical mass of male change agents.
146. The evaluation in Niger (#49) notes that this was not done, despite being very necessary: "There is no evidence that this project tried to address this through sensitization of and dialogues with the gatekeepers of custom and religion. There are a number of discriminatory practices, which persist even where law reforms have attempted to change such practices. This has led to consistently disparate access to resources and assets by women." The evaluation concludes that the intervention empowered women, but was not transformative because it did not address underlying structural and institutional factors (e.g. customary beliefs), which exacerbate as well as sustain gender inequality. Gender-specific policy dialogues, or training for male gatekeepers of custom and local government institutions, would have been necessary.
147. **Breaking gender roles and stereotypes.** Gender-transformative practices involve challenging common gender beliefs and stereotypes. This was effectively done in a number of projects. Enabling women to earn cash income in economic activities traditionally dominated by men had empowering effects in some projects, such as support of women entrepreneurs in Ecuador (#29), where women

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<sup>62</sup> See IOE Project Performance Assessment. Environmental Conservation and Poverty-Reduction Programme in Ningxia and Shanxi, 2016.

reportedly gained confidence in household decision-making, or in Mozambique (#48) and Bangladesh (#25), where they increased their bargaining power with their male counterparts.

148. There are also examples where IFAD has encouraged men to take up economic activities that were usually performed by women. In Ghana (#30), men were supported to engage in micro entrepreneurship roles traditional to women (soap making), while women were supported in metal work. In Jordan (#32), the evaluation highlights that loans enabled men to take on responsibilities that were traditionally associated with women, and thus share the workload in the kitchen chores of dairy processing for example.
149. Some of the evaluations expressed concerns that in a number of cases IFAD's support to women's small-scale productive activities reinforced women's traditional roles (as in the Plurinational State of Bolivia #42 and the Syrian Arab Republic #13). Yet the increased economic performance of those activities may also result in a better recognition of women's roles.
150. **Functional skills training (literacy, etc.).** In contexts with prevailing conservative gender roles and values and resulting high illiteracy rates among women, IFAD effectively addressed functional skills gender gaps, for example in Jordan (#10) and the Syrian Arab Republic (#13). Literacy courses addressed drivers of discrimination against women and unequal power relations by giving women access to other avenues of information and education, allowing informed decision-making and creating opportunities for income generation and socializing. Evaluations thus link participation of women in training courses and employment opportunities with their social awareness and self-confidence (Syrian Arab Republic #13) and women's literacy training with increased women's empowerment and solidarity among women in all communes (Burkina Faso #44). In China (#28), the project partnered with the National Women's Federations to reach ethnic minority women through literacy, technical training and education on health and nutrition.

#### **(v) Overview – effective GEWE practices**

151. This final section presents an overview of the effectiveness of different GEWE practices reviewed in the synthesis sample. The table below presents the practices which were found more effective in contributing to GEWE on the left side. On the right side are the practices which were found less effective because evidence on their contribution to GEWE provides a rather mixed picture. This does not mean that they are not effective in principle. For example, the evidence shows that the contribution of rural finance interventions to GEWE was mixed. Many projects report large numbers of women beneficiaries, but often this was the result from self-targeting or other supporting factors. Financial services were found more gender-inclusive, where they worked with providers specifically serving women.
152. Similarly the provision of general infrastructure which has helped to improve women's lives in many cases, but needs to be combined with other practices to make an effective contribution to GEWE. Findings are also mixed with regard to functional skills training, which in a number of cases was not sufficiently oriented to needs, including the strategic needs of women.
153. A more positive picture emerges from the review of practices to enhance women's participation in public life. These are common in IFAD interventions and there are many positive examples where they helped to enhance women's awareness and confidence. But a number of evaluations have pointed out that women's participation in decision-making has often remained limited and more would need to be done to overcome barriers to full participation and enhance their role in public life, e.g. by motivating women to become active, strengthening their confidence to raise their voice, and changing perceptions by men. Practices to engage with policy makers on GEWE at national and local levels were still an

exception in the sample reviewed. More needs to be done to build powerful networks and alliances on GEWE beyond the local level.

Table 4

**GEWE effectiveness quadrant, indicating levels of results evidenced**

	<b>More effective</b> ( <i>consistent results evidenced</i> )	<b>Less effective</b> ( <i>mixed results evidenced</i> )
<b>More common</b>	Breaking gender roles and stereotypes Representation and voice in local governance institutions Functional skills training	Inclusive financial services Infrastructure
<b>Less common</b>	Labour-saving technologies and practices Off-farm employment Establishing value chains, access to markets Technical and vocational training Working with men	Child care support Backyard and home gardens Promotion of IGA Policy engagement at national and local levels Legal rights on land and forests

154. The review found that practices to improve women's access to resources and opportunities are common, and in many cases effective, in terms of the economic empowerment of women. In particular interventions enabling women to take up a role in value chains and marketing can make a contribution to GEWE. Backyard and home gardens can help enhance women's role in household food production and income generation, but were found less transformative. Positive examples of promoting women's IGAs were still rare in the sample reviewed. Practices addressing women's time poverty were generally found effective, but need to be more widely applied.
155. Practices aiming to break gender roles and stereotypes were found particularly effective for GEWE. Working with men should become more common, because it is highly effective in supporting GEWE.<sup>63</sup>

## C. GEWE impact

156. This section reviews the available evidence on gender-transformative practices and changes, as they were documented in the IOE evaluation sample. In particular, we are looking at root causes of inequality and disempowerment identified through the evaluations and how they were addressed, and the evidence of impacts beyond direct project outcomes along the four GEWE impact domains, as described in the ToC (chapter IV). At the end of this section we identify examples of transformative interventions.

### (i) Addressing root causes of gender inequality and powerlessness

157. A few of the evaluations refer to the root causes of gender inequality. In some cases, it is mentioned that the project did not address the root causes of gender inequality or exclusion such as women's access to other livelihood opportunities (Azerbaijan PPA #16). The PPA for the Plurinational State of Bolivia (#27) raised the issue of the lack of consideration of other drivers of exclusion, such as effective access to land and other assets, lack of information and training, and discrimination over access to land, inequality at home and the specific difficulties of women heads of household to access land.
158. Projects in Zambia (#55) and Azerbaijan (#16) addressed drivers of exclusion, discrimination and unequal power relations, through rural credit and microenterprise development. For the rural finance interventions, where specific staff tried to boost women's participation and included discussion groups on health, nutrition and rights (India #46), the impact assessment study observed that microcredit clients reported improvement in health and education of children, although the evaluation hesitates about whether this improvement is due to credit,

<sup>63</sup> For further analysis of the effectiveness and impact of practices across the review sample, please refer to annex IV.

income or training. The following evidence from evaluations illustrates how interventions tried to address the root cause of gender inequality and disempowerment.

159. **Drudgery.** Addressing women's work burden tends to have many beneficial impacts. Reduction in time spent on household chores made a big change in women's lives in India (#46) and Yemen (#54). It freed up women's time for engaging in income generation and in decision-making platforms, and also contributed to enhanced literacy and household food security.
160. **Illiteracy.** Similarly, illiteracy is an important root cause preventing equal participation and benefits. In Burkina Faso (#44), women were reportedly able to claim joint access to family resources, in particular land, as a result of literacy and women's rights activities. In the Syrian Arab Republic (#13) literacy courses and women's membership in grazing committees and cooperatives enabled them to participate in decision-making processes. Literacy courses also addressed unequal power relations by giving women access to other avenues of information, education and informed decision-making.
161. **Exclusion from secure access to land and productive resources.** Women have less access to land than men. They are often restricted to so-called secondary land rights, meaning that they hold these rights through male family members. Women thus risk losing entitlements in case of divorce, widowhood or their husband's migration. Where they own land, their parcels are generally smaller and of lower quality.<sup>64</sup> Without secure land access or tenure, women are also excluded from access to other resources, such as membership in technical or water user associations, credit, financial services and farm investments, thus greatly limiting their ability to improve livelihoods and incomes.
162. Secure land rights can have a strong empowering effect on women, in that they reduce their reliance on male partners and relatives, increase their bargaining power within the household and improve their chances of accessing extension services and credit. The confidence gained from increased tenure security can further encourage them to undertake land and other agricultural investments, and to join producer organizations.<sup>65</sup> There are a number of cases where IFAD supported access to land rights, but evidence on GEWE outcomes is either not documented or not conclusive (#4, #56, #20). For example, in Viet Nam (#4) the number of women with FLUCs is not clear, nor is it clear the degree of control women had of the forest land and its products (in relation to the men in their family). The PPA does not explore power relations between men and women in a household, where a woman may be the de-facto co-owner of the forest resource, but her access to and control of the resource is actually restricted by a male relative.
163. **Gender-based violence.** Violence limits women's ability to exercise agency and make choices. It can involve physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence. Violence against women and girls both reflects and reinforces inequalities between women and men. It is rooted in gender discrimination and results in greater vulnerability of women throughout their life cycle.<sup>66</sup> IFAD has addressed issues of gender-based violence in some contexts, for example in Senegal (#33) and Ecuador (#29), and in Bangladesh (#25) by mobilizing marginalized women and providing them with technical and social development training.
164. **Limited social capital.** In many agricultural settings with limited female labour migration, women's social capital is limited and mainly confined to family relations and the immediate neighbourhood. Hence, the organizational activities integrated

<sup>64</sup> FAO. 2010. Gender and land rights: Understanding complexities, adjusting policies. Policy Brief 8.

<sup>65</sup> FAO. 2016. Developing gender-equitable legal frameworks for land tenure: A legal assessment tool.

<sup>66</sup> Alena Sakhonchik, Isabel Santagostino Recavarren, and Paula Tavares. 2015. Closing the Gap—Improving Laws Protecting Women from Violence. World Bank.

in many IFAD-supported interventions may create opportunities for women to participate in meetings outside the household. In contexts where women's mobility is limited, these changes can be significant. A number of projects have enabled women to take positions in community committees and management meetings (Plurinational State of Bolivia #42; crop societies in Sri Lanka #22), which in some cases transformed their status. The evaluations report a number of cases where women's participation in groups set up for a different purpose, like credit, also provided a space for women to discuss and engage on other issues, such as child marriage, dowry, polygamy and rights of women and children (Plurinational State of Bolivia #42) or even take collective action against gender-based violence (Bangladesh #25). Also, women's participation in adult literacy classes has been reported to generate similar transformative changes (Kenya #3).

165. **Gender norms** of course are at the roots of gender inequality, and are often thought most difficult to address. Some of the interventions report to have challenged gender norms. As mentioned, participation in GEWE organizational activities can do so. Bringing women into decision-making forums of mixed committees at community level (India #47), allowed women to begin to address issues like gender-based violence. The integration of women in labour contracting societies in Bangladesh reportedly broke gender division, as women became involved in formal wage labour; the demonstration that women can do 'traditional men's work' (e.g. brick laying) had a significant impact on the perception of gender roles in the community. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia (#27), a good practice to influence public perceptions is the female entrepreneurship award.
166. Evidence around changes in social and gender norms supported by GEWE interventions is likely to be uncertain and not very explicit in the evaluations. In some cases, women's active participation in economic activities (like vegetable gardens, marketing and dealing with buyers and suppliers) or local development discussions is portrayed as helping to change the image and position of women in society. This is mentioned in the case of Sudan (#34), through the acceptance of participation of women in the public sphere by men, and similarly in Burkina Faso (#44) and Pakistan (#50).

#### **(ii) Enhancing women's self-esteem, status and recognition**

167. Perhaps the clearest impact of GEWE interventions, beyond the enhanced access to economic resources, is on women's self-esteem, decision-making and recognition. In many cases, this is facilitated through participatory approaches that provide women with a voice in the organization of benefits provided. The following are some examples of the various types of GEWE interventions.
168. **Group participation.** The support to mutual interest funds in Ecuador (#29), facilitated through the formation of women's groups was reported to have also improved decision-making in the households, increased women's self-esteem, helped them gain respect through their organizations and become part of important decisions in the community (they were also asked for advice from neighbouring communities on setting up and managing the mutual interest funds). In India (#46), women's participation in self-help groups and federations had enhanced their mobility, while the financial literacy intervention helped them negotiate better with banks and government, and enhanced their say in how household money was spent. Women reported a sense of self-worth (and treating their female children as equals to male children for education and health care, educating girls in business skills).
169. **Safe spaces.** In some settings where women's participation in public life is not common or easily accepted, creating safe "women-only" spaces may have transformational effects, in particular where women are vulnerable to violence and harassment. In Bangladesh (#41) the creation of women-only market stalls and the setting up of registered labour cooperatives for women led to transformational

changes, enhancing women's confidence and status. In Zambia the Cross Border Trading Association provided safe accommodation for women in the market, and also provided support to victims of theft or rape.

170. **Appreciation of local knowledge.** In many cultural and religious traditions, women have primary responsibility for transmitting cultural and spiritual knowledge and practices, and group identity more generally, to succeeding generations. In the process of modernization, the value of local knowledge diminishes. Therefore, women working in traditional agricultural systems often face prejudices and low appreciation, due to what is seen as low educational status and ignorance. Appreciation of the local knowledge that women hold may thus be transformative, as reported in the Plurinational State of Bolivia (#27) and Ecuador (#29), where women's self-esteem increased with the recognition of traditional knowledge and local customs. A similar case was reported in Uganda (#35), where the appreciation of local seeds and knowledge also increased women's self-esteem.
171. **Rights and entitlements.** An important intervention to increase the self-esteem of marginalized women was to educate them on their rights and entitlements, as happened in India (#47), where training was provided to tribal women on gender, rights and entitlements. Similarly in Nepal (#20), where caste discrimination was reported to be receding with improved access to resources, which created a sense of belonging to the leasehold groups from the lowest caste. The evaluation also noted that subsequently women became more engaged in community affairs. The Nepal CPE reports consistent testimonies from women interviewed during field visits, that the Leasehold Forestry and Livestock Programme has made them more confident to speak in public, enabled them to access training and group loans, and ultimately helped to start regular savings.

### **(iii) Challenging gender roles and power relations**

172. Gender shapes power relations at all levels of society. In fact, the set of roles, behaviours and attitudes that societies define as appropriate for men and women ('gender'), may well be the most persistent cause, consequence and mechanism of power relations from the intimate sphere of the household to the highest levels of political decision-making.<sup>67</sup> Challenging gender roles and power relations is an important step towards gender equality and women's empowerment, and involves changes at household and community level, as the following cases illustrate.
173. **Household decision-making.** Changes in household-level decision-making are particularly difficult to document and assess.<sup>68</sup> For Cambodia (#6), there is some evidence of mutual decision-making by men and women, and of men taking on more household chores. Changes in household decision-making can be caused equally by various interventions. Some evaluations claim that the participation of women in entrepreneurship, and of them obtaining an independent source of income, improved decision-making in the household (Ecuador #29). Similarly, microcredit support (Mozambique #48 and Bangladesh #56) was felt to have led to increased bargaining power with their male counterparts. Involvement in labour contracting (Bangladesh #41) was reported to have improved "member position in the family", as they received more respect for and value of their opinions and became more involved in discussions and decision-making. Finally, for Burkina Faso (#44) anecdotal evidence on some women having a stronger voice or a greater say in household decision-making was attributed to their increased earning power, and also to the information and skills transferred through gender sensitization sessions.

<sup>67</sup> Diana Koester. 2015. Gender and Power. Developmental Leadership Program Concept Brief 4.

<sup>68</sup> In India, surveys with participants and non-participants were compared in terms of level of consensual intra-household decision making reported by interviewees. A composite indicator on Women's Empowerment (covering decision making, leadership and voice) was also used.

174. **Household division of labour.** The sharing of the domestic workload and a more equitable distribution of responsibilities between women and men was reported in several cases, although some doubts about the credibility of testimonies remained. In Brazil (#43) some tasks which were previously considered women's sole responsibility were also carried out by men. A similar change in gender roles is found in Uganda (#35), where a considerable number of 'women's tasks' were undertaken as a family activity, with reportedly more joint participation in decision-making. In Bhutan (#26) it remained unclear if men's share in house work or women's workload has increased. In Sri Lanka (#22), men and women repeatedly stressed that they work together equally in support of the households' management and income. They share productive and non-productive tasks, including cooking, childcare, laundry, farming, marketing and mutually support household micro enterprises. Similar claims were found in Viet Nam (#4), although here women continue to bear the biggest burden of housework, while men are only starting to contribute.
175. **Community decision-making.** Participation in community affairs is often reported to enhance respect, women become increasingly consulted for decisions in the community, and sometimes they even become active agents of change themselves. In Ecuador (#29), as mentioned, women were reportedly asked for advice from neighbouring communities on setting up and managing the mutual interest funds. In Burkina Faso (#44) and Haiti (#9) evaluations found a growing recognition of the role of women in the community, as well as more involvement in management positions through established groups. Although in Haiti the occupation of leadership positions in the rural savings and loans centres was still considered slight. Similarly, in Brazil (#43), women won the community's recognition of their role as economic agents with leadership capabilities in agriculture and other economic activities, not only as beneficiaries of social activities.
176. In other, more conservative settings, even the participation of women in community development committees was considered as an important change of gender roles and relations, after it was accepted by the male community members (Sudan #34).<sup>69</sup>
177. **Leadership.** In Burundi (#5) the promotion of women leaders' networks and family development centres strengthened leadership on issues such as child protection and women's and children's rights. Also in Burkina Faso (#44), training provided to women was reported to have led to the creation of community networks of female leaders, working actively on conflict resolution and the role of women in relation to human rights. In a few cases, women subsequently started running in local elections, as reported in Bangladesh (#25) and Burundi (#5).

#### **(iv) Policy influence and GEWE practice uptake**

178. The 2010 CLE on gender noted that there are many cases where IFAD has supported innovative practices at local level, but that these have been successful largely due to individual initiatives and commitment, rather than to systematic IFAD processes. For broader impact, innovation at the local level must lever change on a larger scale.
179. The synthesis found some cases where GEWE practices were incorporated into local or national governmental policies, strategies or laws, increasing the likelihood that they will continue beyond the life of the project. These included women-only community development committees (Yemen #38), childcare services (Mongolia

<sup>69</sup> The evaluation shows the percentage of men who answered to have become comfortable with women's participation in leadership and decision-making within the community, along with the testimonies of women interviewed and not reporting any problem with their husbands about their participation in training activities. Moreover, they reported that their husbands and men in general started to appreciate the role of women in family life and their participation in the community economic and social activities. Some women confirmed that their husbands began to entrust them with management of the household budget.



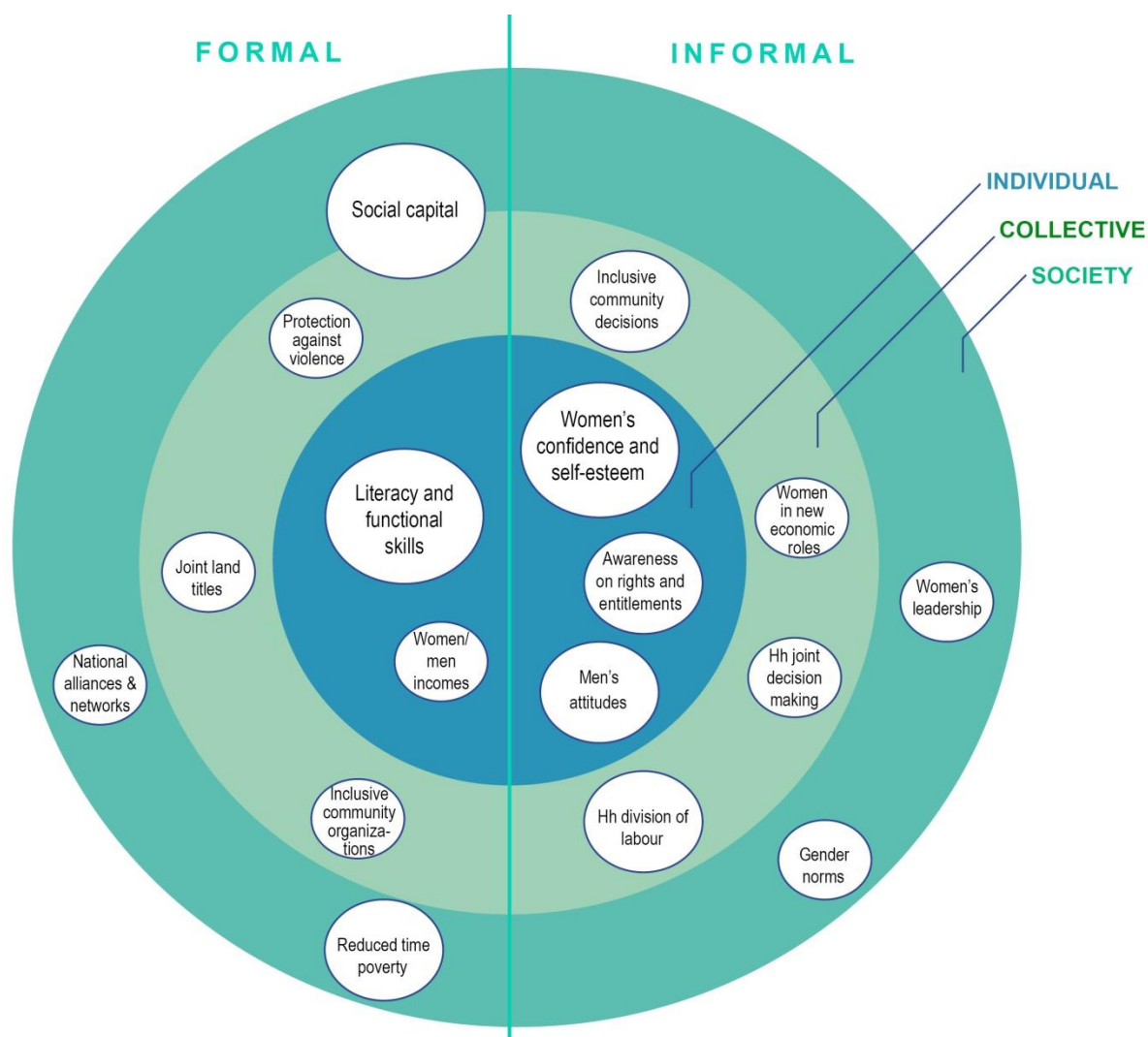
#19), inclusive business support services (Ghana #30), dedicated market areas for women (Bangladesh #41) or gender observatories (Senegal #33).

180. The evaluation of the rural development project in Uruguay (#24) highlighted the institutionalization of rural development platforms that foster public-private coordination and the consolidation of local credit committees piloted by the project, including budget allocation at national and local levels to sustain them. Women accounted for the majority of positions of institutional territorial representation of the project, as well as among the extension workers and technical assistance staff. In Burundi (#5), the local level development structures supported by the project were recognized by the 2005 commune law and regulated by a specific ordinance to clarify their composition, mission and function at all levels.
181. In Nepal (#20), IFAD successfully supported new forms for managing natural resources, which benefited women and were later scaled up. Small, often degraded, plots of state forest were leased for 40 years to a group of 7-15 very poor and/or socially excluded households within the community. In most cases goats were provided to the members while the forest grew, and saving and credit groups were created. This new concept for forest management targeted very poor and excluded households.

#### **(v) Overview – GEWE impact**

182. IFAD has addressed root causes of gender inequality and women's powerlessness, in particular illiteracy, exclusion from access to resources and limited social capital. This is linked to the nature of IFAD-supported projects, which include an emphasis on participatory approaches and on capacity-building, including group formation and functional skills training, as discussed in the previous section on effectiveness. These had a clear impact on women's self-esteem, status and recognition, and in a number of cases challenged gender roles and power relations, although the latter is not well-documented. Measures to protect women from violence have enabled them to claim public spaces, such as markets, which in some cases was among the enabling factors transforming women's lives. Social mobilization and strengthened leadership has helped women to also claim political spaces. Reducing drudgery and challenging gender norms have led to transformational changes in secluded and marginalized communities, where, in particular, the provision of water as a common good had a catalytic effect.
183. Figure 5 below provides an overview of the most significant impacts from GEWE interventions. The most significant changes identified in the synthesis sample were enhanced women's confidence and self-esteem, literacy and functional skills and social capital. The figure illustrates that the most significant changes supported by IFAD interventions were at the individual level. Some changes were also observed on cultural norms and practices, but they require further evidence and more systematic monitoring. Very few examples of formal systemic change were documented, for example on laws, policies and government capacities.

Figure 5: **Spheres of GEWE impact**



Note: Size of circles indicates levels of impact.

## D. Sustainability

184. Evaluations of the sustainability of projects often combine evidence on the continuation of benefits of several results, and it is not always possible to isolate the sustainability of GEWE practices. Several evaluations highlight the difficulty of maintaining GEWE results in cases where services and benefits lacked technical or financial support, or were insufficiently institutionalized or linked to higher level institutions (Ecuador #29, Uganda #14, Uganda #35, Viet Nam #4, Brazil #43, India #46).
185. Prospects for sustainability are good based on how well the activities have been received and the **positive impacts** achieved. Providing that labour-saving technologies can be timely and locally repaired and maintained, their enabling effect on women's empowerment was likely to be sustained. Similarly, the contests for technical support services (Plurinational State of Bolivia #27), were seen and recognized by the public as beneficial and some communities continue to organize yearly competitions.
186. High levels of **illiteracy** among women and particular groups of women are a common cause of social and economic exclusion in rural areas. Thus, it is unsurprising that the majority of case studies in the study included literacy programmes. When women's literacy levels are not sufficiently addressed, project

activities such as savings and credit groups, are mostly unsustainable (Ecuador #29).

187. The use of a **participatory approach** is an important factor for sustainability. When facilitating and enabling the rural poor to be the drivers of their own development, project activities that promote gender equality and women's empowerment have proved to be sustainable (Burkina Faso #44, Sudan #34).
188. **Backyard gardens** that are relatively small-scale and straightforward to manage have favourable cost-benefit ratios and are likely to remain economically viable in the long-term (Brazil #43). Seasonal **labour** employment in rangelands (Syrian Arab Republic #13) has the potential to continue, since the grazing committees and cooperatives were likely to remain functional after project completion. The labour contracting societies in Bangladesh (#41) and the 40,000 microcredit groups (composed mainly by women) were also considered as sustainable, because of their continued market linkages.
189. The grounding of gender issues in **community structures** (committees and groups) was an attempt to institutionalize project approaches within local governance processes, for example in Sudan (#34). In the case of India (#47), the programme execution committee was not yet linked with the local self-governance system or the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. Only 11 per cent of the self-help groups promoted were linked to banks, and operation and maintenance of land and water-related infrastructure was not planned for.
190. Rural finance practices and results can become sustainable if the usual sector practices are applied at the macro, meso and micro level (Pakistan #51). This is usually beyond the aspirations of GEWE practices, which tend to focus on local benefits, but in some cases was used as an argument to ensure sustainability of these interventions (Bhutan #26). In the case of the **formal banking institutions**, wider rural outreach and linkages with the banking sector also had positive effects on women's sustained access to financial services.
191. The involvement of **national organizations** can also help to ensure the continuation of GEWE benefits, for instance, the Ministry of Women's Affairs or similar women's federations or unions (China #28, Viet Nam #15, Kenya #3, Mongolia #19). Around 10 per cent of the cases reported that implementing gender strategies through a national agricultural institution, including its extension services, was important in ensuring sustained gender benefits.
192. Conducive **legal and institutional frameworks** are essential for sustainability. In Azerbaijan (#16), the legal framework of water user associations was critical for the potential sustainability of the intervention. FLUCs are also a key factor supporting sustainability.
193. National policies, strategies or funds in place in the country can also provide good prospects for sustainability, as in the case of the Bangladesh National Women's Development Strategy (#41 and #56), the gender aspects of the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (#51) and the Law on Gender Equality and National Strategy for Gender Equality in Viet Nam (#15 and #36).

**Key points**

- Guidance by IFAD's corporate GEWE Plan of Action and policy was important to ensure that interventions were relevant and address key GEWE issues.
- IFAD's attention to key constraints highlighted by global gender indices, such as lack of access to rural financial services, time poverty and exclusion from group participation is highly relevant, also in the context of the Agenda 2030.
- Explicit consideration of specific women's needs is important and specific targeting strategies are thus relevant.
- There is scope to better address the diversity of women (ethnic, religious, life cycle) and their needs for inclusive poverty reduction.
- Practices to improve food security and nutrition are not well-represented in the reviewed sample.
- Practices to improve women's access to resources and opportunities are common and in many cases effective, in terms of the economic empowerment of women.
- Interventions enabling women to take up a role in value chains and marketing are still few, but the available evidence suggests that they have the potential to make a significant contribution to GEWE, if properly designed and targeted.
- Practices addressing women's time poverty were generally found effective, but need to be more widely applied.
- Root causes of gender inequality and women's powerlessness, in particular illiteracy, exclusion from access to resources, and limited social capital, were addressed through participatory approaches and capacity-building.
- Measures to protect women from violence have enabled them to claim public spaces, such as markets, which in some cases was among the enabling factors transforming women's lives.
- Social mobilization and strengthened leadership has helped women to claim political spaces.
- Reducing drudgery and challenging gender norms has led to transformational changes in secluded and marginalized communities, where in particular the provision of water as a common good had a catalytic effect.
- Very few examples of formal systemic change were documented in the sample, for example on laws, policies and government capacities.

## VI. Emerging good practices and contributing factors

194. This chapter identifies good practices from successful GEWE interventions, as well as some less successful interventions, and the factors that have contributed to the success or failure.

### A. Good practices from GEWE interventions

#### (i) Highly effective GEWE interventions

195. The review identified the following four projects as highly effective because they contributed to all three IFAD GEWE objectives and also reported significant GEWE outcomes. A common characteristic of these four projects is that they all devised a combination of practices to support women's access to resources and opportunities, decrease women's time burden, address legal and institutional constraints, and to strengthen women's and men's awareness and confidence. Another common characteristic is that interventions were well implemented and targeted, and used a highly participatory, community-based approach to address the multiple causes of poverty and social and economic exclusion, within the context of a multisectoral project:
- (a) Viet Nam Rural Income Diversification Project (#4): The project targeted women and ethnic minorities. Good GEWE practices included the joint FLUC, female extension workers and savings and credits groups. The Viet Nam Bank for Social Policy and the Women's Union were instrumental for successful implementation of these activities.
  - (b) Uganda Area-based Agricultural Modernization Programme (#14). Women greatly benefited from access to microcredit from selected savings and credit cooperatives, market stall rehabilitation, goat production and improved rural infrastructure. The project's engagement with men and traditional leaders represents good practice.
  - (c) Brazil Rural Communities Development Project in Bahia (#43). This was a highly participatory project that provided great benefits to women, in particular through the access to water, adaptive technology (food processing), and home gardens. A good GEWE practice was using young women as development agents.
  - (d) Badia Rangelands Development Project in the Syrian Arab Republic (#13). The project targeted herder communities through a participatory approach. Women greatly benefited from literacy and functional skills training, social investments and participation in grazing committees.
196. **Examples of less effective projects.** At the other end of the continuum, there were less effective projects that were either poorly implemented and thus underperformed in the achievement of general targets,<sup>70</sup> or failed to target or mobilize women, or in some cases a combination of both:
- (a) The Republic of Moldova Rural Business Development Programme (#11) suffered from poor project implementation. Although it promoted employment generation, it failed to address issues on gender inequality in terms of employment opportunities and equal wages.
  - (b) The Jordan National Programme for Rangeland Rehabilitation and Development (#10) suffered from slow implementation and women were not specifically targeted in the project.

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<sup>70</sup> The review sample included seven project that were rated less than satisfactory (3 or less) by IOE with regard to GEWE. Six of those projects were also rated not satisfactory (3 or less) with regard to project effectiveness and overall project performance. The exception is the project in the Republic of Moldova, which was rated 3 for GEWE and 4 for project effectiveness.

- (c) The Bhutan Agriculture, Marketing and Enterprise Promotion Programme (#26) failed to create significant benefits for a majority of women, despite high male outmigration. Women only constituted 37 per cent of the beneficiaries and their exclusion from markets was not addressed.
197. Analysis of the cases above suggests that: (a) effective project implementation is a necessary condition for successful gender interventions; (b) highly participatory approaches are important for gender-inclusive outcomes, if combined with specific strategies to target women; and (c) a combination of different types of GEWE practices (as classified by this synthesis) is likely to generate significant GEWE outcomes across different policy domains.
  198. These findings are corroborated by the analysis of a larger sample within the GEWE transformation index (see annex IV). Interventions that scored highly on the index generally used a number of mutually reinforcing GEWE practices, in particular supporting women's access to resources and opportunities, in combination with practices for enhancing women's and men's awareness, consciousness and confidence. The latter includes different practices aiming to break gender roles and stereotypes, as well as functional skills training. Interventions that scored low on the index had a strong focus on rural finance, but lacked other empowering practices, for example promoting women's employment and IGAs, women's access to markets or integration into value chains, or strengthening women's agency and capacity to influence community development priorities.

## **(ii) Gender-transformative GEWE interventions**

199. As **gender transformative** we identified those practices and interventions where evidence suggests that they: (a) strategically addressed the root causes of gender inequality and discrimination; (b) successfully challenged gender roles, norms and power relations; and (c) set off processes of social change beyond the immediate project intervention. While there are a number of projects that contained transformative practices (as documented above), the evaluations documented transformative changes only for a small number of cases. In the following, we present projects that reportedly contributed to gender-transformative changes beyond the immediate intervention.
200. The strongest gender-transformative changes were reported for a few projects that successfully supported women entrepreneurs through a combination of social mobilization, capacity-building, microcredit, and in some cases women-friendly infrastructure and services. The **Rural Small and Microenterprise Promotion Project** in Rwanda (#12) reportedly contributed to changing mindsets to be more business oriented (see case study 12 in annex V). The Bangladesh **Market Infrastructure Development Project in Charland Regions** (#41) effectively supported women claiming new space and roles in marketing (see case study 41 in annex V).
201. There are a few cases where empowerment was exclusively economic. In Bangladesh (#41) and Burundi (#5) women became engaged in public life, following a combination of social mobilization, capacity-building, and IGAs. While these processes were triggered through community development programmes, some women became later engaged in local governance issues, which was an unintended effect of those programmes (see Burundi case studies in annex V).

The **Microfinance and Technical Support Project in Bangladesh** (#25) specifically targeted women, 90 per cent of them landless, in districts where women were excluded from mobility, income and decision-making. According to the 2014 PPA, the provision of microcredit, together with technical and social development training, had an important impact on household-level gender relations and helped expand the role of women inside and outside the home. This was manifested in increased mobility and greater control over revenues from IGAs. The PPA observed that the project opened new spaces for women to attend meetings, spend time on training and visits, and run enterprises. Empowered through the project, a small number of women started engaging in public affairs, e.g. in local mediation centres (Salish) and campaigning for local government elections, which was an unintended effect of the project. Furthermore, the PPA found that awareness on issues such as child marriage, dowry, polygynous marriages and women's and children's rights had improved significantly. Issues of social exclusion were even addressed in very conservative settings (e.g. Sylhet).

202. The same benchmarks on transformative change cannot be applied in settings with very restrictive gender norms. In those most secluded and marginalized communities, even the provision of basic infrastructure triggered some transformative changes. In particular, the provision of domestic water has transformed community relations, including gender relations, in communities that were very conservative and where previously women had not been involved in public life. The projects specifically targeted women to get them involved in community affairs.
203. The **Sudan Gash Sustainable Livelihoods Regeneration Project** (#34) made a significant effort made to challenge traditional and religious beliefs around male headship and dominance, and through this enabled women's increased voice in the sphere of community leadership and decision-making (see case study 34 in annex V). The **Al Mahara Rural Development Project in Yemen** (#38) initiated women-only and men-only community development committees that gave women confidence in their ability to initiate and manage development initiatives (see case study 38 in annex V).
204. In other cases, it was found that a highly participatory approach to community development was effective in achieving gender-inclusive results (e.g. Viet Nam #4, Brazil #43). These projects reached out to a large number of women and successfully mobilized them for community affairs. There are, however, no gender-transformative outcomes documented. Some evaluations have argued that community-driven approaches may generate substantial benefits for both genders, but are unlikely to transform traditional gender roles if they build on existing power relations, rather than challenging them.<sup>71</sup> Challenging existing power relations requires additional strategies, for example facilitation through external change agents.

## **A. Contributing factors**

205. Given the small sample, and the various outcome indicators that are associated with women's economic empowerment, identifying factors for success or failure is not easy or precise.

### **(i) Contextual understanding and sensitivity**

206. Transformational results are more likely when IFAD interventions occur within a favourable policy and institutional context. Analysis of average transformation scores against the relevant country's Global Gender Gap (GGG) index in annex IV, indicates that those interventions with the highest scores were found in countries with a relatively high GGG index (#27 in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, #30 in

<sup>71</sup> IOE Project Performance Assessment. Community-based agricultural and rural development projects Nigeria. 2016.

Ghana, #41 in Bangladesh, and #43 in Brazil). The evaluations identified national policies that contributed to a conducive environment for GEWE interventions, such as the Gender Policy of Ghana (#7), the National Policy on Women in India (#18, #46, #47), the Rwandan Government's Girinka Programme on income generation for women (#12) and the Law on Gender Equality in Viet Nam (#15, #36, #37). Many of the highly effective interventions identified in the previous section were implemented within the context of conducive policy environments, such as Uganda (#14), Brazil (#43) and Viet Nam (#4).

207. But the evaluation evidence also suggests that GEWE interventions can be transformative in very difficult contexts, such as such as Yemen (#39) and Sudan (#34). Yemen ranked last out of 135 countries in the GGG index. Success factors included a supportive government, cultural sensitivity when dealing with traditional community leaders, time and resources to overcome the many problems encountered, and an equal number of men and women field staff promoting the inclusion of women in project activities and planning.
208. In other cases, opportunities were missed to address key drivers of discrimination and exclusion, e.g. in Burkina Faso (#44) where the Sustainable Rural Development Programme should have involved some engagement with traditional leaders and gatekeepers of customary beliefs, or policy dialogue to address the drivers of gender inequality.

Box 7

**Jordan country programme evaluation (2014)**

The 2010 Global Gender Gap Report ranked Jordan 120<sup>th</sup> out of 134 countries, reflecting a decline in economic and political empowerment indicators. Only 11.5 per cent of females are economically active and the unemployment rate for women is twice as high at 24.1 per cent. Traditional practices also restrict women's choices in pursuing non-traditional professions. There is a growing trend among women to finance small-size enterprises and start up their own businesses. Lending conditions for women are more challenging as it is difficult to provide the credit requirements. Most women lack information about loans and borrowing, and poor and vulnerable women do not have access to traditional sources of collateral that the Agricultural Credit Corporation requires. The CPE concluded that while some drivers of market exclusion were addressed, issues of social exclusion and of discrimination were not addressed. IFAD's efforts in sensitizing field staff on gender issues did not translate to institutional or policy changes. The envisaged support to the gender unit at the Ministry of Agriculture did not take place and was dissolved by the Ministry in 2004.

CPE Jordan #32, Gender working paper (paras. 1-21).

209. Overall the synthesis review found that the **socio-economic and cultural contexts** of interventions were not sufficiently understood and addressed. For example, religious and ethnic diversity, and the role these play in shaping gender roles and in approaches such as value chain and financial inclusion place greater demands on understanding these roles and devising specific approaches. Only eight cases presented some general contextual information about the poverty situation in the country, with some scattered gender information that provided further details on the context of the GEWE intervention. For instance, in Sudan (#34), within the conservative setting of the Hadandowa tribe, the project interventions achieved significant impacts. Long-held traditional and religious beliefs about male headship and dominance underscore the project's impressive achievement in terms of being able to influence women's increased voice in the sphere of community leadership and decision-making.
210. As in other development interventions, **local ownership** and an **alignment with local realities** is identified as critical, including for rural finance interventions. These may include cultural factors like religious beliefs, and practical circumstances such as market access and start-up costs (e.g. Mozambique #48).



## **(ii) Change agents**

211. Some evaluations highlighted the importance of **change agents** in promoting GEWE. The review underlined the role that private entities (microfinance institutions, cooperatives, NGOs, economic interest groups, indigenous organizations or district assemblies) played as change agents.
212. Another change agent usually identified were **gender focal points** at the level of the project or national institution, along with gender mobilizers or animators. But in only a few cases the evaluations considered them as effective change agents. Brazil (#43) reported a gender focal point, but does not discuss how this contributed to gender-related activities. The one case that described an effective gender focal point was in Senegal (#33). This important WCA regional focal point provided support and monitoring, maintained coherence of the country programme and participated in supervision mission. In most others they were not able to find conclusive evidence about the effectiveness of gender focal points.
213. The involvement of husbands (and other family members, including better-educated daughters and sons) comes up in a number of cases as an important factor influencing norms around gender equality. In Uganda, the **sensitization of male household members and traditional leaders** was seen as instrumental in the shifts in gender roles. Likewise, in India (#46) the sensitization of men on gender issues was also considered a success factor. In Sudan (#34), negotiation of spaces with men, who showed increased acceptance of women's participation in public life and decision-making, was an important factor contributing to a shift in gender roles, with women participating in community level decision-making. In the support to Ecuadorian indigenous women's groups, the involvement of their husbands and **university-educated daughters** was considered key for mostly illiterate women (#29).
214. Identifying women leaders and champions, when opening up new areas or activities (e.g. extension or credit), and training **women trainers and mobilizers** helped promote new gender norms and roles. Providing training on gender issues for implementing agencies is also important (India #46).

## **(iii) Project design and management**

215. The review clearly indicates that **multiple and complementary activities** promoting GEWE in a project lead to greater change in gender roles and relations (Uganda #14, Viet Nam #4, Syrian Arab Republic #13, Brazil #43, Rwanda #12). The linkage between functional literacy activities and specific interventions was praised as a success factor in the case of labour contracts in Bangladesh. In Burkina Faso (#44) financial literacy activities were associated with training on business management, credit and IGAs (the programme continued to work with the non-paid literacy trainers, without external support). Such multifaceted approaches may involve a phased-strategy to achieve gender outcomes, as in the case of the project in India (#46) aiming to reduce the workload of women before fostering economic empowerment and decision-making.
216. The **complexity of project design** was mentioned as a limiting factor in Chad (#2). A few interventions aimed at tackling some of the underlying causes of gender inequality and women's poverty, but overall the project was too complex and demanding given the local context, and performance was poor (the implementation period was three instead of eight years).
217. A number of evaluations have identified the lack of gender expertise in the **project management unit** as a limitation to achieving GEWE objectives (Ecuador #29, Ghana #30). Others highlighted the benefits of having women as project staff and field workers. Other mechanisms that have led to positive gender mainstreaming have been the inclusion of rural women leaders in Burundi (#5), Uganda (#35) and Bangladesh (#41); engagement with male household heads and community leaders in Uganda (#14), Sudan (#34), and Uganda (#35); engagement with and

use of local institutions in Sri Lanka (#22), Ecuador (#29), Sudan (#34) and Bangladesh (#41); and in one case, by raising women's influence through training and capacity-building in Yemen (#39).

218. **Budget allocations** to implement the project gender strategy have also been raised as an important factor. For example, in Ecuador (#29) there was a lack of resources allocated to gender-related activities, in Brazil (#43) the gender budget line was also used for other activities, and in Mongolia (#19) the gender budget was very small and yet mostly unspent.
219. **Strategic alliances** with particular institutions. Good results emerged through partnerships with particular government ministries or agencies, indigenous organizations, local institutions and NGOs.

#### **(iv) Women's ability to participate**

36. An interesting point raised in the Nepal CPE (#20) as a factor explaining the success in relation to relative participation of women in leasehold forestry user groups and community organizations is the **migration** of working-age men. This could have helped the project's GEWE results related to equal voice and influence so the gap left by men in leadership of the leasehold forestry user groups could have been filled by women. Outmigration of males is also mentioned in the PPA for the Plurinational State of Bolivia (#27). Nonetheless, the PPA also identified the relatively low uptake per community of beneficiaries, attributed to male outmigration and auto-exclusion in targeting processes, i.e. the poor not being able to dedicate more time to project activities.

#### **Box 8**

##### **Community-based Rural Development Project in Cambodia**

The 2012 evaluation in Cambodia (#6) found that the number of female village animal health workers and farmer promoters was low, although "there do not seem to be any cultural/social barriers or discrimination for women to access extension services. However, women may be in a disadvantaged position by the selection process for farmer promoters and village animal health workers, which involves other villagers in consultation with the village chief; and the selection criteria are: willingness to take up the job, ability to read and write, and being active and outstanding farmers. Women have a number of household chores in addition to their farming activities and it is estimated that household work and childcare take up 91 per cent of their time. Moreover, 57 per cent of women in the poorest households are illiterate."

220. On occasion the **workload burden** of women has been overlooked or insufficiently addressed. For instance in Bangladesh (#41), the project outcomes of women's improved mobility and economic opportunities led to an increase in women's overall workload. In Rwanda (#12), it was noted that the reduction in women's workload was prioritized in some projects and not others, but that in the Rwandan context more work is needed in this area, particularly with regard to maintenance of infrastructure and irrigation, to ensure sustained benefits.

**Key points**

- Good practice projects used a combination of practices to support women's access to resources and opportunities, decrease women's time burden, address legal and institutional constraints and strengthen women's and men's awareness and confidence.
- They were well implemented and targeted, and they used a highly participatory and community-based approach to address multiple causes of poverty and social and economic exclusion, within the context of a multisectoral project.
- The strongest gender transformative changes were found in a small number of projects successfully supporting women entrepreneurs through a combination of social mobilization, capacity-building, microcredit, and in some cases, women-friendly infrastructure and services.
- In a few cases women became engaged in public life, following a combination of social mobilization, capacity-building and income-generating activities.
- In those most secluded and marginalized communities, the provision of basic infrastructure triggered some transformative changes. In particular the provision of domestic water transformed community relations, including gender relations, in communities that were very conservative and where women had not previously been involved in public life.
- IFAD interventions seem to be more likely to support transformational results within a favourable policy and institutional context, but can be transformative in very difficult contexts, if a different benchmark is applied.
- Cultural sensitivity, local ownership and alignment with local realities are key factors for success.
- Male household members and traditional leaders and university-educated daughters can be agents of change.
- Multiple and complementary activities that promote GEWE in a project lead to greater social change.

## VII. Rural poverty impact – what works for women

221. The following sections present key findings on how GEWE contributes to poverty reduction. The evidence from the review sample is complemented with relevant lessons from IFAD (e.g. previous IOE evaluation syntheses reports) and international practices.

### A. GEWE – poverty linkages

222. IFAD sees GEWE as instrumental for effective and sustainable poverty reduction. Yet the evidence on how GEWE contributes to the reduction of rural poverty is not systematically recorded. While gender concerns are by and large integrated into the poverty targeting approach, the results of increased participation of women on poverty reduction is not systematically monitored and recorded. The 2010 CLE on gender already noted that there was insufficient gender-disaggregated information for all of the domains in which IOE rates poverty impact to ascertain whether projects had differential impacts on women and men (2010 CLE Gender, p. 32)
223. Reducing women's poverty and addressing root causes of gender inequality is an objective in itself. The standard provision of services – financial services, training, and extension services – as part of an integrated approach to poverty reduction remains important to reduce women's poverty, and many evaluations show positive results. For marginalized women who tend to suffer from multiple constraints, an integrated approach that addresses multiple barriers is likely to be most successful.<sup>72</sup> Services need to be provided in ways that take account of gender constraints and norms: for example milk collectors coming close to the doors of households where women's mobility was constrained or delivering training in adequate venues for women.
224. Research shows that there are significant development gains to be made in ensuring women's equitable access to and control over economic and financial resources. The impact of inequality on access to resources represents a global challenge with implications at individual, family, community and national levels. Gender equality in the distribution of economic and financial resources has positive multiplier effects for a range of key development goals, including poverty reduction and the welfare of children.<sup>73</sup> Empowered women – for example those supported through cash transfers – contribute more and better to the health, nutrition and productivity of whole families and communities.

### B. Poverty impacts and good practices

225. **Rural finance.** The bulk of IFAD's interventions focus on access to economic resources and opportunities. Rural financial services is the most common instrument in our sample. This has proven, both in IFAD's experience and elsewhere,<sup>74</sup> an important instrument for poverty reduction and potential transformation for poor households in general, for women-headed households, and for women within households (headed by men).
226. In several cases, credit finance was linked to gains in household income and assets, e.g. in Azerbaijan (#16). Support to mutual interest funds in Ecuador (#29), facilitated through the formation of women's groups, helped women obtain credit for the first time, reducing the selling of assets in emergencies. In other cases, e.g. Sri Lanka (#53), loans from the women's banks were mainly used to meet family expenses. Women are preferred clients because they have higher repayment rates, they work better in the group lending programmes, and their enhanced income benefits families through improved nutrition, health, education

<sup>72</sup> Morduch et al. (in Buvinic and Furst-Nichols 2014) found that a large asset transfer with intensive training was successful for ultra-poor women in India, moving them out of subsistence agriculture.

<sup>73</sup> World Survey 2009, page v: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/WorldSurvey2009.pdf>.

<sup>74</sup> DCED (2015); Buvinic and Furst-Nichols (2014: Table 1) summarizes thirteen programmes providing access to capital.

and well-being. However, concerns over the 'automatic' benefits to women of microcredit schemes have been raised,<sup>75</sup> for example with respect to limitations in the income gains.

227. **Home gardens.** In the Plurinational State of Bolivia (#27), impacts on food security are related to the spread of family vegetable gardens, fruit orchards, chicken coops, raising guinea pigs, or better livestock care. This provided increases and diversification of food for households through home consumption. In Haiti (#9), the project contributed to better nutrition through home gardens, which were put in place for approximately 100 families and improved diets (through, for example, more beans) were observed. In the project that supported backyards in Brazil (#43), small investments were reported to have had positive impacts on production and diets.<sup>76</sup> Similar impacts were reported for the post-tsunami project in Sri Lanka (#53) that included garden construction within the housing component.
228. **Land and legal rights.** Research shows that enhancing women's formal control over farmland, supported by education of women, increases the productivity of women farmers, their autonomy, and other indicators of well-being of women and families.<sup>77</sup> Interventions that have been shown to work include land registration (Ethiopia, Rwanda) and joint land titling (Ethiopia, India, Viet Nam).<sup>78</sup> A small number of projects supported changes in legal rights determining women's access to opportunities, notably in terms of land. These were combined with training to make women aware of their rights. These approaches showed promising results, both in terms of enhancing production or environmental management, and enhanced the confidence of marginalized groups. Enhanced access to forest land through joint FLUCs in Viet Nam (#4) and Ethiopia (#57) was credited with more sustainable use of forest resources and conservation.
229. **Cash income controlled by women.** Direct support to IGAs was successful in a number of projects. Women's empowerment through income in the hands of women has led to better health and education for children (#46, #29). Women's IGAs in the project in Azerbaijan (#16) that provided credit to livestock activities led to increased meat and milk consumption within households, thereby improving diets. This is in line with evidence globally that shows that increasing the share of household income controlled by women changes spending in ways that benefit children.<sup>79</sup>
230. **Markets and value chains.** There is growing evidence on how value chain development can help increase livelihoods and net income of smallholder producers.<sup>80</sup> Farmers' livelihoods benefit when they collaborate with experienced commercial partners, often supported by market facilitators and public organizations. Evaluation shows this can be particularly successful in simple bulk products, and when gradual improvements are well planned.<sup>81</sup>
231. Women have been shown to benefit from inclusion in value chains and markets, depending on accompanying measures of organization and, for example, safe

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/beijingat10/A.%20Women%20and%20poverty.pdf>.

<sup>76</sup> The implementation of productive backyards generated additional net annual income of US\$490-981, not high in absolute terms but important as it eases the household budget constraints to buy better quality food. For goat raising, the income generated by selling the animals quadrupled (from US\$981 to US\$3,267).

<sup>77</sup> UN, Rodgers and Menon case study (in UNF 2014), see O'Sullivan (2016) and case studies of the World Bank's Africa Gender Innovation Lab (GIL; <http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/africa-gender-innovation-lab>).

<sup>78</sup> Evidence highlights the importance and complexity of establishing rights and control. See for example Menon, Rodgers, Kennedy case study Vietnam (in UNF 2014); O'Sullivan (2016) and case studies of the World Bank's Africa Gender Innovation Lab (GIL; <http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/africa-gender-innovation-lab>).

<sup>79</sup> <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures>.

<sup>80</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (2011); see for example CARE (2015), BSR (2015), Mayoux (2012) suggest how community-led methodologies can reduce gender inequalities in value chain approaches, through addressing sensitive issues of violence and ownership, and through involvement of men.

<sup>81</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (2011); see for example CARE (2015), BSR (2015).

access to market areas.<sup>82</sup> To enable women to succeed,<sup>83</sup> complementary measures may be needed, including legal frameworks, savings accounts that allow women to protect their income, transportation facilities, training and women's organization (#7, #46). For instance, with the support of the Rwanda Smallholder Cash and Export Crops Development Project (#52), women formed high quality coffee growers' cooperatives spontaneously as part of the project's work with cooperative organizations.

232. The review of IFAD experiences shows that women's market participation has been mixed but was often positive, and that inequalities require targeted, well-sequenced capacity development and empowerment support. Women were successful in activities promoting smallholder access to markets, and exceeded expectations in a number of cases. It also found that while women were almost always considered in smallholder access to markets programming, few projects had specific activities, processes, or resources devoted to addressing gender equality and the specific needs of women with respect to greater market access.<sup>84</sup>
233. **Infrastructure** that provides conditions for economic growth and reduces women's time burden simultaneously appear to be particularly important. In Bhutan (#26), the construction of roads decreased the time needed for children to reach school and for household members to reach health services, and improved access to markets and employment. Similar impacts are found through the construction of bore wells and water storage tanks (#3, #7). Technological improvements typically have gender dimensions; they can have transformative potential for women, as they can help to simultaneously enhance women's production and reduce their time burden. Freeing up women's time allows them to engage in income generation and decision-making (India #46, #20, #26) and can contribute to poverty reduction.
234. **Irrigation.** Women face greater obstacles in accessing irrigation for crop production and livestock raising, due to insecurity of land tenure and their exclusion or marginal involvement in user associations.<sup>85</sup> Successful practices to increase women's participation thus address inequalities in governance structures and membership requirements.
235. Despite the significant role women play in managing water, they are under-represented in related governance institutions and often excluded from decision-making processes. In Cambodia, while women participated in various groups, and benefited from improved water supply, in terms of decision-making, their role remained limited.<sup>86</sup>
236. **Women's organizations.** The organization of women appears to be a critical factor of successful interventions.<sup>87</sup> Farmer groups, associations or collectives can provide individual women producers with access to markets and help overcome constraints they face in meeting the demands of agricultural supply chains (#29, #41, #14, #4 and #5). Women's participation in local governance can facilitate their contribution to poverty reduction, for instance through community development committees (#38, #5, #34, #47).<sup>88</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Evidence elsewhere indicated the importance of taking into account women's responsibilities for households particularly when production is being commercialized (Scott et al. 2014).

<sup>83</sup> De Haan (2016); Agnes Quisumbing at The Urban institute, 17 May 2016 highlighted that it is difficult to generate rigorous evidence along the entire value chain.

<sup>84</sup> IOE Evaluation Synthesis, Smallholder Access to Markets, 2016, p. 43.

<sup>85</sup> World Survey 2009, page vii and vii.

<sup>86</sup> IOE evaluation synthesis on water conservation and management, 2014:

[www.ifad.org/evaluation/reports/evaluation\\_synthesis/tags/water/2785515](http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/reports/evaluation_synthesis/tags/water/2785515).

<sup>87</sup> An OXFAM study (Baden 2013) emphasizes the importance of women's collective action, in the context of small-scale farmers, and shows the benefits (income, access to and use of credit, access to market information) of being members of a group.

<sup>88</sup> Mayoux (2012) suggests how community-led methodologies can reduce gender inequalities in value chain approaches through addressing sensitive issues of violence and ownership, and through involvement of men.

237. **Off-farm employment.** Labour is the most widely available factor of production at the disposal of poor people around the world and the primary means through which they earn a living. Although women's share of employment has increased, a gender division of labour persists. The creation of employment for women can improve overall household income and net assets, as well as improving their food security status (#41, #13).
238. **Female entrepreneurs.** While women are found in a range of entrepreneurial activities, many tend to be concentrated in micro, small and medium businesses as a result of their responsibilities for unpaid work, limits on mobility, lack of collateral and limited financial skills (World Survey, 2009, page ix). In Panama (#21), the project employed women circles which encouraged and empowered women entrepreneurs to start microenterprises through an innovative "The Women Contest" for feasible microenterprise proposals. Importantly, these initiatives, and others help to attract the attention of state and donor agencies in the target region.
239. **Reducing women's workloads.** For the interventions requiring new and extra work for women, care needs to be taken to ensure this does not simply add to women's overall household workloads, or preclude them from the comparatively larger potential income value chain activities can generate. Strategies should be in place to avoid this. For instance, in Brazil (#43), time-reducing technologies were promoted to decrease the burden of repetitive time-consuming work women traditionally perform in order to allow them to participate in social capital development and empowerment-building activities. Once empowered, women were better prepared to engage in income generation and access market knowledge.

### **C. Equal benefits for those hard to reach**

240. **Monitoring and reporting equal benefits.** The transformational SDG Agenda emphasizes equitable and inclusive development outcomes for all, including for those hard to reach. For example, under SDG 1, target 1.4. is to "ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance". IFAD's M&E systems and reports from the field often do not differentiate the challenges of implementing and realizing benefits from project activities for different subtarget groups, such as indigenous women, widows, women-headed households and young women. Without adequate information it is difficult to establish the extent to which heterogeneous groups of women benefit from project interventions and why this is so. For example, indigenous women were targeted through a number of interventions, but from the evaluations it was difficult to establish within the larger group of women whether and how many indigenous women benefited and to identify the determining factors.
241. **Addressing multiple exclusion.** There were a few transformative interventions which tried to address issues of multiple exclusion and discrimination (see section on targeting specific groups of women under relevance). However in only very few cases the evaluations were able to report on the benefits achieved for different groups of women. One of the few positive examples was Ghana (#7), where the project worked with disabled women and successfully realized benefits, such as reduced drudgery and access to education. The project also targeted women stigmatized as 'witches', who previously were excluded from literacy and forced into drudgery-related activities, including fetching water.

**Key points**

- Reducing the time women spend performing household chores or drudgery-related productive activities can free up time for other, empowering activities. Women's time constraints also determine their participation in communal affairs and it is important that project design assess the various dimensions of this and devise specific strategies to address them.
- Strengthening recognition of women's household roles and those as caregivers is an important objective in itself. Building on their roles, such as in support to backyard activities, can be an important element in this – even if the growth potentials are limited.
- Access to land also determines access to other resources such as membership in technical or water user associations, credit, financial services and farm investments, thus greatly limiting their ability to improve livelihoods and incomes.
- Gendered approaches to rural finance in combination with training and IGAs have shown to have had a large degree of success, if they incorporate existing good practices on how to address women's needs into design and monitor gendered access to use of credit consistently.
- Gender-sensitive approaches to enhance market access, for example through provision of women-friendly infrastructure or services, have a high potential for transformation and are not costly.
- Protection against violence enables women to claim public spaces in settings with restrictive gender norms.
- More needs to be done to create equal benefits for those hard to reach, in particular in monitoring and reporting equal benefits and addressing issues of multiple exclusion.



## VIII. Lessons

- (1) **Empowering and gender transformative approaches** need to be integrated into project design. Evidence shows that interventions directly aiming at transformative changes are more effective for GEWE than general and inclusive approaches to rural poverty reduction.
- (2) **Multiple and complementary activities** promoting gender equality and women's empowerment are more likely to facilitate changes in gender roles and relations.
- (3) Concrete measures to reduce **women's workloads** must be part of project design, as heavy workloads may prevent women from participating. Provision of firewood and water can reduce workloads, whereas new IGAs may add to women's workloads. Providing childcare can enable women to participate in new activities.
- (4) Support to **women's organizations**, e.g. for credit, marketing and community planning is conducive to GEWE because it can provide platforms for mutual support and interest, in particular in conservative contexts. Social mobilization and enhanced leadership may also help women claim political spaces.
- (5) **Working with men** is critical as they are often the gatekeepers of customary practices that limit women's access to resources or public spaces.
- (6) A rigorous analysis of the **socio-economic context** is needed for effective strategies to address the root causes of gender inequality and women's powerlessness and to be able to challenge gender roles and power relations.
- (7) **Cultural sensitivity** is required for discussing and promoting gender equality and women's empowerment with local men and traditional leaders, in particular in challenging contexts.
- (8) **Effective project implementation** is a necessary condition for having successful gender interventions. Resources for gender-related activities need to be adequately budgeted and used.
- (9) **Highly participatory approaches** are important for gender-inclusive outcomes, if combined with specific strategies to target women.
- (10) Measures to protect women from **violence** may enable them to claim public spaces, such as markets. In some cases such interventions were among the enabling factors transforming women's lives.
- (11) Promoting **unconventional and new roles for women** helps shifting mindsets and commonly held beliefs. For example, supporting IGAs outside the traditional division of labour or training women as extensionists, community or trainers helps create new role models and challenges stereotypes.
- (12) Women's constraints exist at broader policy and macro-economic levels as well as at the project level; while this limits transformative potential at project level, there are opportunities to work alongside policy changes and with organizations at national level to leverage the intended change at project level.
- (13) **Policy engagement** must be part of a transformative approach, to ensure that positive changes on the ground are sustainable and are brought to the attention of decision-makers for scaling up.
- (14) What "**gender transformative change**" means depends on the context. Different benchmarks are needed for different contexts, but good contextual analysis is a general prerequisite.

## IX. Conclusions

242. IFAD has embarked on a new transformative agenda on GEWE. It has set itself ambitious targets to achieve real transformative gender impacts by addressing the root causes of gender inequalities through investments and policy engagement. At the moment there is no clear agreed definition or operationalization of the gender transformative concept, in IFAD or elsewhere. Furthermore, there has been no systematic review of what works for gender with a prospect of scaling up. The focus of this synthesis was therefore to systematically review the available evidence on gender practices and results with the aim of identifying transformative practices as well as the key factors enabling or hindering GEWE in the context of IFAD interventions.
243. For the purpose of this evaluation, we define transformative approaches as those that aim to overcome the root causes of inequality and discrimination through promoting sustainable, inclusive and far-reaching social change. Transformative approaches have in common that they challenge existing social norms and the distribution of power and resources.
244. Overall, our review found that guidance by IFAD's corporate GEWE Plan of Action and policy was important to ensure that interventions are relevant and address key GEWE issues. IFAD's attention to key constraints highlighted by global gender indices such as access to rural financial services, reduction of time poverty and group participation is highly relevant, also in the context of Agenda 2030.
245. The review found that in many cases IFAD has addressed the root causes of gender inequality and women's powerlessness, in particular illiteracy, exclusion from access to resources and limited social capital. Participatory approaches and capacity-building, including group formation and functional skills training, had a clear impact on women's self-esteem, status and recognition, and in a number of cases challenged gender roles and power relations.
246. Most of the changes supported by IFAD interventions were at the individual level. They have successfully empowered women by providing access to resources or acquiring new skills, for example. Yet transformation requires change beyond individual capabilities. The review identified some interventions that successfully contributed to changing cultural norms and practices, but those changes are less tangible and often not well-documented and monitored. There were only very few examples where IFAD interventions enabled formal systemic change, for example on laws, policies and government capacities, and this is where a major gap exists.
247. **Targeting women.** The assumption underlying most targeting strategies is that women will be able to benefit, and that their priorities will be addressed through participatory planning and implementation. To some extent, participatory processes are instrumental in addressing women's needs, and there are many positive examples of where highly participatory approaches have led to social change. Nevertheless, explicit consideration of specific women's needs and specific strategies to target women are critical to ensuring that women benefit equally and that their strategic needs are addressed. There is scope to better target the diversity of women along lines of ethnicity, religion, and life cycle through specific targeting strategies. Participatory approaches are often not effective in overcoming generally-held beliefs about particular groups, in particular minority groups, which must be addressed through specific and targeted interventions.
248. The synthesis concludes that in project design there are opportunities to be more explicit and intentional about the choices to approach GEWE. There is no doubt that IFAD interventions have created significant benefits for women. The provision of general infrastructure and in particular water is not necessarily a gender intervention, but has important gendered aspects, and can be enhanced to ensure broader benefits for women. The review showed that provision of infrastructure can

address some root causes of gender inequality, such as time poverty, and that it can galvanise group action to also empower women. But these benefits must be intentionally built into the design and they must be consistently followed up and monitored. Furthermore, sustainable access to resources, in particular land, often also requires changes in laws and administrative practices that need to be considered at design.

249. **Evidence of benefits and GEWE outcomes.** While gender is a significant focus in many IFAD projects, the documentation on the analysis of gender inequalities, and impacts on these as a result of projects, tends to be limited. Identifying good practices from the existing evaluations is often further complicated by the fact that most interventions work with a combination of practices.
250. This review found that there is an opportunity to document these better, to enable learning lessons. For example, project documentation could be more explicit about definitions and meanings of empowerment, how this is assessed, and what results the project achieves – both in terms of empowering women and the broader positive impact this has.
251. Measuring transformative change is an inherently complex and holistic endeavour and gender-transformative measurement systems must be equipped to embrace complexity and context-specificity, as well as the halting and often unpredictable nature of social change. There is a wealth of promising processes and practices for measuring meaningful relational change, social norm change or change in the less tangible aspects of recognition.<sup>89</sup>
252. **Transformative practices.** The systematic review helped identify some general patterns that characterize effective and transformative gender practices. The synthesis found a number of practices that, in combination with other more conventional interventions, led to transformative changes. Reducing drudgery and challenging gender norms have led to transformational changes in secluded and marginalized communities, where in particular the provision of water as a common good had a catalytic effect.
253. Interventions that have a clear transformative purpose were found to be more effective for GEWE. An important transformative purpose is to break traditional gender roles and stereotypes through activities that can range from training, income generation or marketing, to participation in decision-making. This can also be part of social mobilization and leadership strategies, which in some cases have helped women claim political spaces
254. Although some practices may be more transformative than others, it is ultimately the combination of practices that brings about change. Thus, the synthesis concludes that it is the use of multiple and complementary gender practices that can facilitate changes in gender roles and relations. For example, practices to improve women's access to resources and opportunities in combination with practices to enhance women's and men's awareness and consciousness were found very effective.
255. Policy engagement on GEWE has not yet received sufficient attention and support, but it is an important element of a transformative approach. Important legal and policy constraints can be effectively addressed through engagement with government and women's organizations or networks at local and national level, building on good GEWE practices on the ground.
256. Building strategic networks and alliances on GEWE has proved successful in some cases, but was not systematically pursued. Powerful change agents for transformative approaches can be government partners or national agencies, if

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<sup>89</sup> See: Emily Hillenbrand, Nidal Karim, Pranati Mohanraj and Diana Wu. 2015. Measuring gender-transformative change. A review of literature and promising practices. CARE USA for WorldFish and the CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems.

they are sufficiently sensitized. In many cases, microfinance institutions, cooperatives, NGOs, economic interest groups, indigenous organizations or district assemblies have been change agents. Also, the sensitization of men and traditional leaders and making them change agents themselves has proved successful in shifting gender roles. Gender focal points are often seen as important change agents, although the evidence from evaluations is not conclusive in this respect. Gender focal points may often not have been sufficiently empowered themselves to facilitate broader changes.

## X. Recommendations

257. **Recommendation 1. Conceptualize and integrate the gender transformative approach for use throughout the organization for IFAD10.** IFAD has set itself ambitious targets on gender transformative interventions under IFAD10. It is therefore important to develop a shared understanding of the concept throughout the organization if gender transformative practices are to be promoted and monitored in a consistent manner. The shared understanding of the concept will also underpin the highly satisfactory (6) transformative ratings at project design and closure that will feed into reporting under IFAD10. Harmonization of ratings approaches should also involve IOE.
258. **Recommendation 2. Develop explicit theories of change to underpin targeting strategies for different groups of women, together with indicators to monitor them at the point of design, and offer tailored interventions based on available good practices** (see chapter VII). Theories of change are critical to linking design, implementation and monitoring of gendered targeting strategies. Specific targeting strategies are required to address the needs of different groups of women, such as very poor women, landless women, single women, female-headed households, indigenous women and young women, together with good contextual analysis. Relying on a participatory approach will not be sufficient, rather explicit strategies have to be integrated into design and followed through during implementation, based on good gender analysis. The effectiveness of targeting will require further disaggregation of beneficiary data for monitoring purposes.
259. **Recommendation 3. Establish systematic M&E of disaggregated benefits and GEWE outcomes at corporate and project levels.** The revision of the RIMS framework provides an opportunity to improve gender-disaggregated performance indicators at output and outcome level. While some key performance indicators should be set at corporate level (e.g. indigenous women, young women), the main effort will be to improve granularity (and quality) of indicators and data at project level. At the same time projects should improve the documentation of GEWE results, in particular GEWE outcomes and impacts, using appropriate methodologies for measuring gender transformative changes within a given context, such as case studies and participatory and qualitative research to complement standard M&E data.
260. **Recommendation 4. Report consistently on GEWE outcomes and impacts in GEWE evaluations and include sound contextual analysis to explain results (IOE).** Evaluation methods should place more emphasis on capturing GEWE results beyond beneficiary numbers and outputs, and should allow space for sufficient analysis of the contextual factors that have shaped those results. The adoption of a theory of change approach in IOE evaluations provides opportunities to integrate gendered results and assumptions. Beyond this, good gender or social analysis in evaluation also means that the required expertise must be available in every evaluation team.
261. **Recommendation 5: Replicate good practices covering the three GEWE policy objectives and strengthen working with men.** The synthesis has identified a number of practices that are relevant for promoting GEWE objectives. The report showed that some practices are more common than others; some practices have shown good results while others need to be improved to become effective. The critical review and validation of practices, at corporate and project level, is part of the process of replication and scaling up. The process of reviewing both success and failure will have to continue beyond this report. Based on this synthesis, we offer the following **guiding principles** for replicating practices:
- (a) Practices that worked well, but are not yet common, should be promoted (e.g. value chains, marketing, off-farm employment).

- (b) Labour-saving technologies and working with men are not common practices yet, but the available evidence suggests that they can be highly effective. Practices to influence men and traditional leaders and practices to address women's time poverty should be widely integrated into IFAD's interventions.
- (c) Practices that are common, but so far have yielded mixed results, should be improved based on the available international practices. IFAD should critically review some commonly held beliefs and assumptions about gendered benefits and promote services that are better tailored to the strategic needs of women (e.g. inclusive rural finance, infrastructure, functional skills training).
- (d) Some practices are highly relevant, but not yet effective or common (e.g. promotion of IGAs, land rights), often because they are meeting contextual limitations (social and cultural values, institutional and legal frameworks). For those, the assumptions and influencing factors (in their theories of change) that have been limiting their effectiveness and wider application need to be carefully reviewed. The wider application of those practices needs to be accompanied with adequate strategies to address the systemic issues that may limit their effectiveness.
- (e) Policy engagement and scaling up successful GEWE practices are key to enabling transformative change. There are some good practices already, but they need to be more widely understood and applied within IFAD.
- (f) Finally, it is the combination of practices that brings about transformative change. Therefore IFAD interventions should be encouraged to use a range of different practices that more comprehensively address the complexity of issues and factors affecting GEWE.

## Evaluation framework

	<i>Review of project samples following screening</i>	<i>Review of contextual information for projects rated high (<math>\geq 5</math>) or low (<math>\leq 3</math>)</i>	<i>Review of gender transformative practices from other partners</i>
<b>Relevance:</b>	Relevance index		
What were the gender-specific objectives and targets, and how consistent were they with the policies and frameworks at the time of design?	✓	✓	✓
To what extent can the interventions reviewed be considered as “fit for purpose” with regard to the 2030/SDG Agenda?	✓		✓
To what extent did the GEWE strategies address the drivers of exclusion, discrimination and unequal power relations?	✓		✓
How important were the gender-related interventions to achieve IFAD’s objectives on sustainable poverty reduction?	✓	✓	
To what extent has the project been able to address the expressed priorities of women?	✓	✓	
To what extent did it challenge established gender beliefs and norms?	✓	✓	
<b>Effectiveness:</b>	Effectiveness index		
To what extent have GEWE objectives been achieved, in terms of equitable benefits?	✓		
What is the supporting evidence that (gender disaggregated) results were achieved (or not)?	✓		
How “transformative” was the intervention: To what extent did the interventions address the root causes of gender inequality, exclusion and discrimination? Did it cause wider change beyond the immediate beneficiaries?	✓		✓
Which interventions worked and under what circumstances? What are the factors explaining the success? Is the practice likely to work elsewhere?	✓	✓	✓
What have been the key change agents for GEWE?	✓	✓	✓

	<i>Review of project samples following screening</i>	<i>Review of contextual information for projects rated high (<math>\geq 5</math>) or low (<math>\leq 3</math>)</i>	<i>Review of gender transformative practices from other partners</i>
<b>Impact:</b>	Impact index		
What impact did GEWE interventions have on rural poverty?	✓		
How did women's lives change as a result of these interventions?	✓		✓
To what extent has the project contributed to a sustainable change of gender roles and relations (transformative change)?	✓	✓	
<b>Sustainability:</b>	Sustainability index		
Which practices and results have been sustainable?	✓		✓
And what were the factors supporting sustainability?	✓	✓	✓
<b>Lesson learned:</b>			
Which types of GEWE practices have supported transformative change? What were the conditions under which they worked? Which practices would work elsewhere?	✓		✓



## Sampling and screening process

1. The screening process to establish the sample to be reviewed occurred in five steps. It involved four layers of screening to arrive at a sample of 57 GEWE ratings and evaluation products.
2. The first step started by establishing the population. Between 2011 and 2015, there were 192 GEWE ratings established through IOE evaluations. Out of these, 21 evaluations were removed for having been rated at a later stage by a different evaluation product (i.e. uncompleted programmes having been given a CPE rating that were then evaluated by a PCRV or a PPA once completed). The evaluation population was set at 171 ratings (table 1), and distributed among 18 CPEs, 33 PPAs, 60 PCRVs, and 2 impact evaluations. These evaluations underwent a rapid review to establish five binary (yes/no) criteria scores for the evaluations' evidence base. These were: evaluations described results achieved (outcomes); how results were achieved (strategy); whether there was supporting evidence on gender results (i.e. impact studies or other counterfactuals); whether the evaluation clearly identifies and explains factors contributing to good practices; and whether the evaluation explains programme gender practice and strategy failures.

Table 1

**Overall screened sample showing screening criteria sum against gender rating**

Screening criteria sum	Not rated	2	3	4	5	6	Not applicable	Total
0	1	1	5	22	8	0	1	38
1	0	2	6	8	8	0	3	27
2	0	0	2	9	4	0	2	17
3	0	1	1	12	17	0	0	31
4	0	0	4	18	18	3	0	43
5	0	0	0	10	4	1	0	15
Total	1	4	18	79	59	4	6	171
Proportion against total	0.6%	2.3%	10.5%	46.2%	34.5%	2.3%	3.5%	

3. The second step was the first layer of screening for GEWE ratings of 4 and 6. Ratings were filtered to highlight those that had all three of the following criteria: report outcomes, strategies and supporting evidence on gender results. This resulted in 17 ratings as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2

**First layer of screening: strong evidence-base criteria for ratings of 4 and 6**

Screening criteria sum*	4	5	6	Total
3	0	1	0	1
4	4	9	2	15
5	10	4	1	15
Total	14	14	3	31
Screened total	14		3	17

\* Sample filtered to include products that at least report outcomes, strategies and evidence.

4. The third step was to apply a weaker filter for evidence-base criteria for ratings of 5. This was done to increase the sample of GEWE ratings of 5 obtained under the first layer of screening. The aim of this filter was to have a higher number of GEWE

ratings that include outcomes and strategies, so as to have a greater number of potential 'good practice' programmes in the sample. As such, the filter showed ratings that achieved at least two criteria (report outcomes and strategies), and of these, those that had at least three or more criteria were included in the sample. In effect, this screening incorporates the 14 ratings under GEWE rating 5 as seen in table 2 above, while including 22 others by having a wider net. The total sample of GEWE rating 5 samples is 36, as seen in table 3 below.

Table 3  
**Second layer of screening: relatively strong evidence-base criteria for ratings of 5**

Screening criteria sum*	3	4	5	6	Not applicable	Total
2	0	3	2	0	1	6
3	1	8	14	0	0	23
4	4	17	18	3	0	42
5	0	10	4	1	0	15
Grand total	5	38	38	4	1	86
Screened total			36			36

\* Sample filtered to include products that at least report outcomes, strategies and evidence.

- The fourth step was to identify the 'poor-practice' ratings that have a minimum evidence base. These were selected from evaluations with GEWE ratings of 2 and 3 from the overall sample. Those evaluations with a GEWE rating of 2 had to have a screening criteria score of at least 1 to be included, which led to three samples. Those evaluations with a GEWE rating of 3 were subject to more stringent evidence requirements and had to have a screening criteria score of at least 2 to be included, leading to seven samples. The selection applied is shown in table 4 below.

Table 4  
**Third layer of screening: 'poor-practice' screening by evidence-base criteria for ratings of 2 and 3**

Screening criteria sum	Not rated	2	3	4	5	6	Not applicable	Total
0	1	1	5	22	8	0	1	38
1	0	2	6	8	8	0	3	27
2	0	0	2	9	4	0	2	17
3	0	1	1	12	17	0	0	31
4	0	0	4	18	18	3	0	43
5	0	0	0	10	4	1	0	15
Grand total	1	4	18	79	59	4	6	171
Screened total		3	7					10

- The fifth step was to representatively balance the resulting sample of 63 GEWE ratings with the original sample. This was done along two other domains: region and subsector. The comparison by region and subsector of the original sample and the step four sample showed an over-representation of APR samples among the regions (15.8 per cent) as seen in table 5, and an over-representation of credit programmes (9.7 per cent) and no representation of livestock and agricultural marketing programmes in the subsector sample as seen in table 6.

Table 5  
Difference in proportion of overall sample and step 4 sample across regions

	APR	ESA	NEN	WCA	LAC	Total
Overall sample total	49	37	32	29	24	171
Proportion against overall total	28.7%	21.6%	18.7%	17.0%	14.0%	
Sampled total	28	10	8	8	9	63
Proportion against sampled total	44.4%	15.9%	12.7%	12.7%	14.3%	
Difference between sampled total proportion and overall sample total proportion	15.8%	-5.8%	-6.0%	-4.3%	0.3%	

NEN: Near East, North Africa and Europe; LAC: Latin America and the Caribbean.

Table 6  
Difference in proportion of overall sample and step 4 sample across programme subsectors

	RURAL	AGRIC	CREDI	RSRCH	IRRIG	LIVST	FISH	AGRIC MRKTG	MRKTG	Total*
Overall sample total	66	46	22	9	3	3	2	1	1	153
Proportion against overall total	43.1%	30.1%	14.4%	5.9%	2.0%	2.0%	1.3%	0.7%	0.7%	
Sampled total	24	12	13	2	1		1		1	54
Proportion against sampled total	44.4%	22.2%	24.1%	3.7%	1.9%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	1.9%	
Difference between sampled total proportion and overall sample total proportion	1.3%	-7.8%	9.7%	-2.2%	-0.1%	-2.0%	0.5%	-0.7%	1.2%	

\* Does not include CPE overall ratings.

7. The sample was corrected by removing ratings from APR and from credit and rural development subsector programmes, when possible, and by including a rating to both livestock and agricultural marketing subsector programmes. Guiding practice along the elimination of ratings was to remove the rating with the weakest evidence base in each category. The same principle applied to the addition of ratings, though in this case it was the ratings with the highest evidence base. Overall, five APR ratings were removed, of which one was in the rural development subsector and three were in the credit subsector. The remaining rating was a CPE-rated programme which had no evidence base. The only agricultural marketing subcomponent rating and one livestock rating with a screening criteria sum of two were reinserted. The re-balanced sample is contrasted in tables 7 and 8 below.

Table 7  
Corrected difference in proportion of overall sample and step 4 sample across regions

	APR	ESA	NEN	WCA	LAC	Total
Overall sample total	49	37	32	29	24	171
Proportion against overall total	28.7%	21.6%	18.7%	17.0%	14.0%	
Corrected sampled total	23	11	9	8	9	60
Proportion against corrected sampled total	38.3%	18.3%	15.0%	13.3%	15.0%	
Difference between corrected sampled total proportion and overall sample total proportion	9.7%	-3.3%	-3.7%	-3.6%	1.0%	

Table 8

**Corrected difference in proportion of overall sample and step 4 sample across programme subsectors**

	<i>RURAL</i>	<i>AGRIC</i>	<i>CREDI</i>	<i>RSRCH</i>	<i>IRRIG</i>	<i>LIVST</i>	<i>FISH</i>	<i>AGRIC MRKTG</i>	<i>MRKTG</i>	<i>Total*</i>
Overall sample total	66	46	22	9	3	3	2	1	1	153
Proportion against overall total	43.1%	30.1%	14.4%	5.9%	2.0%	2.0%	1.3%	0.7%	0.7%	
Corrected sampled total	23	12	9	2	1	1	1	1	1	51
Proportion against corrected sampled total	45.1%	23.5%	17.6%	3.9%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	
Difference between corrected sampled total proportion and overall sample total proportion	2.0%	-6.5%	3.3%	-2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	1.3%	1.3%	

\* Does not include CPE overall ratings.

8. Overall, the final sample for review consists of 60 ratings, whose population characteristics are presented below.

Table 9

**Sample for review: GEWE ratings against screening criteria sum**

	<i>GEWE rating</i>					
Screening criteria sum	2	3	4	5	6	Total
1	2	1	0	0	0	3
2	0	2	0	0	0	2
3	0	1	0	12	0	13
4	0	4	5	16	2	27
5	0	0	10	4	1	15
Total	2	8	15	32	3	60

Table 10

**Sample for review: regions against screening criteria sum**

	<i>Region</i>					
Screening criteria sum	<i>APR</i>	<i>ESA</i>	<i>LAC</i>	<i>NEN</i>	<i>WCA</i>	<i>Total</i>
1		1	1	1		3
2				1	1	2
3	4	2	3	1	3	13
4	10	8	3	4	2	27
5	9		2	2	2	15
Total	23	11	9	9	8	60

Table 11

**Sample for review: programme subsector against screening criteria sum**

Screening criteria sum	Subsector									Total*
	RURAL	AGRIC	CREDI	RSRCH	IRRIG	LIVST	FISH	AGRIC MRKTG	MRKTG	
1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
3	5	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	11
4	9	7	5	0	1	0	0	1	0	23
5	7	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	12
Total	23	12	9	2	1	1	1	1	1	51

\* Does not include overall CPE ratings.

Table 12

**Sample for review: IFAD loan size against screening criteria sum**

Screening criteria sum	IFAD loan size (millions of United States dollars)				Total*
	0-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	
1	1	0	1	1	3
2	0	2	0	0	2
3	1	7	3	0	13
4	2	10	8	3	27
5	2	6	4	0	15
Total	6	25	16	4	60

\* Does not include overall CPE ratings.

Table 13

**Sample for review: evaluation product against screening criteria sum**

Screening criteria sum	Evaluation product type				Total
	PCRv	PPA	CPE	Impact evaluation	
1	2	1	0	0	3
2	1	1	0	0	2
3	7	1	5	0	13
4	9	9	8	1	27
5	4	7	3	1	15
Grand total	23	19	16	2	60

9. During the review of the sample, it was found that projects rated under CPEs did not have enough individual discussion to be able to extract meaningful findings. As such, CPE ratings rather than project ratings were reviewed. The resultant sample was diminished to 57 evaluation products. The number of impact evaluations, PPAs and PCRVs remained the same, while the number of CPEs shrunk to 57.

Table 14  
Sample for review

Nº	Country	Evaluation product	Year of publication	Evaluation title	Region	IFAD cofinancing (USD millions)	Subsector	Approval	Closing	IOE GEWE rating	Global Gender Gap composite index 2011
1	Chad	PCRV	2011	Food Security Project in the Northern Guéra Region - Phase II	WCA	11.7	RURAL	03/05/2000	26/06/2012	5	0.533
2	Chad	PCRV	2011	Kanem Rural Development Project	WCA	13	RURAL	10/04/2003	26/06/2012	3	0.533
3	Kenya	CPE	2011	Overall	ESA					4	0.649
4	Viet Nam	PPA	2011	Rural Income Diversification Project in Tuyen Quang Province	APR	20.9	RURAL	06/12/2001	07/07/2011	6	0.673
5	Burundi	PPA	2012	Rural Recovery Programme	ESA	20	RURAL	28/04/1999	31/12/2011	5	0.727
6	Cambodia	PPA	2012	Community-based Rural Development Project in Kampong Thom and Kampot	APR	9.99	AGRIC	07/12/2000	17/11/2011	4	0.646
7	Ghana	CPE	2012	Overall	WCA					4	0.681
8	Ghana	PPA	2012	Rural Finance Services Project	WCA	11	CREDI	03/05/2000	08/02/2008	4	0.681
9	Haiti	PCRV	2012	Food Crops Intensification Project - Phase II	LAC	15.4	AGRIC	03/12/1998	18/10/2011	3	
10	Jordan	PPA	2012	Rangelands Rehabilitation and Development Project	NEN	4	LIVST	04/12/1997	08/08/2006	3	0.612
11	Moldova (Republic of)	PPA	2012	Rural Business Development Programme	NEN	13	CREDI	13/12/2005	15/10/2012	3	0.708
12	Rwanda	CPE	2012	Overall	ESA					5	
13	Syrian Arab Republic	PCRV	2012	Badia Rangelands Development Project	NEN	20.2	AGRIC	23/04/1998	08/03/2013	5	0.590
14	Uganda	PPA	2012	Area-based Agricultural Modernization Programme	ESA	13.2	RURAL	08/12/1999	05/05/2010	5	0.722
15	Viet Nam	CPE	2012	Overall	APR					5	0.673
16	Azerbaijan	PPA	2013	North East Rural Development Project	NEN	12.6	IRRIG	09/09/2004	12/06/2012	5	0.658
17	Cambodia	PPA	2013	Rural Poverty Reduction Project (Prey Veng and Svay Rieng)	APR	15.5	RURAL	18/12/2003	17/12/2012	5	0.646
18	India	PPA	2013	National Microfinance Support Programme	APR	22	CREDI	04/05/2000	13/12/2011	4	0.619
19	Mongolia	PPA	2013	Rural Poverty Reduction Programme	APR	14.8	RURAL	05/09/2002	24/10/2011	5	0.714
20	Nepal	CPE	2013	Overall	APR					4	0.589

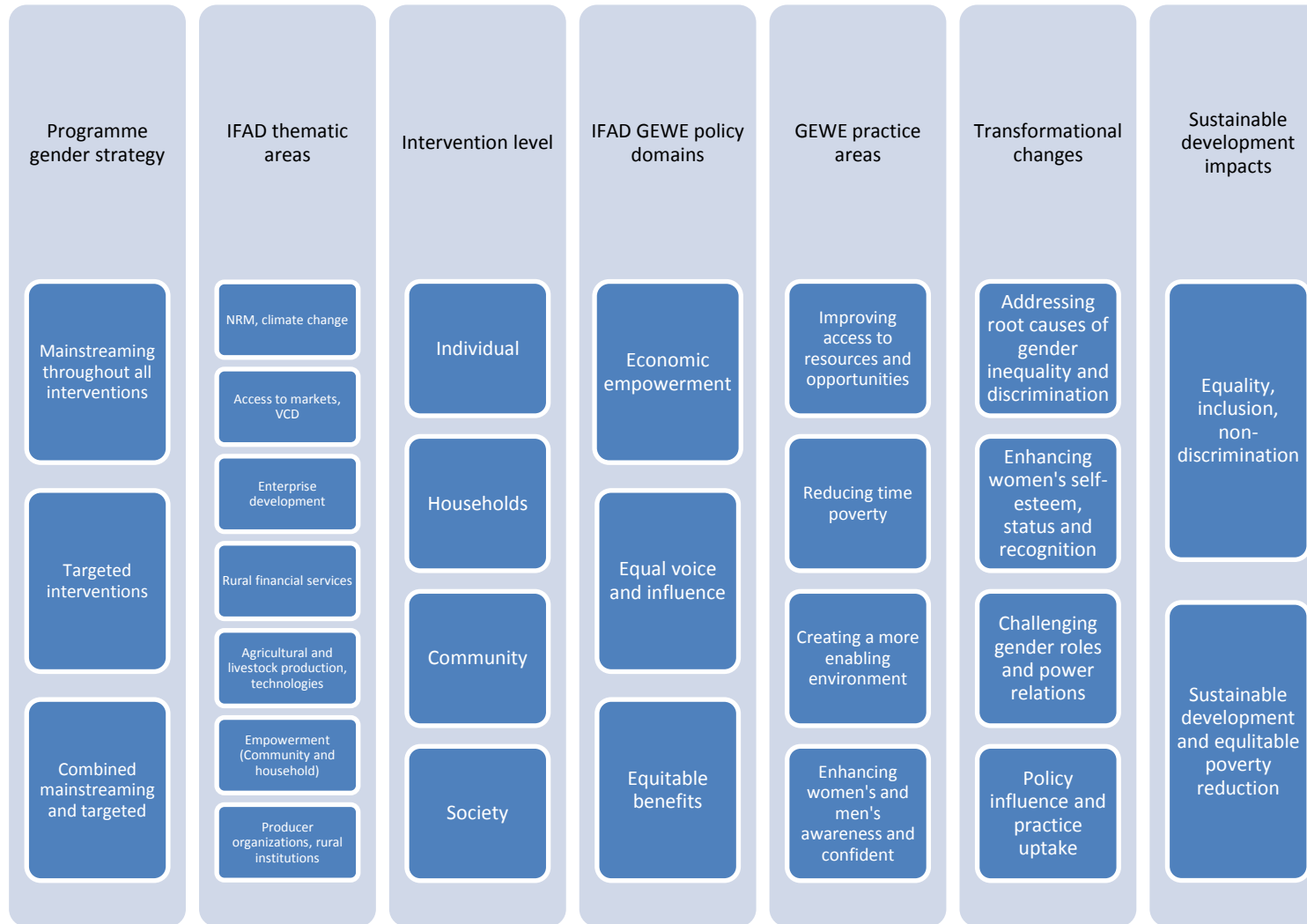
Nº	Country	Evaluation product	Year of publication	Evaluation title	Region	IFAD cofinancing (USD millions)	Subsector	Approval	Closing	IOE GEWE rating	Global Gender Gap composite index 2011
21	Panama	PCRV	2013	Sustainable Rural Development Project for the Ngobe-Buglé Territory and Adjoining Districts	LAC	13.2	RURAL	06/12/2001	05/07/2013	5	0.704
22	Sri Lanka	Impact evaluation	2013	Dry Zone Livelihood Support and Partnership Programme	APR	22	AGRIC	09/09/2004	22/07/2014	6	0.721
23	Sri Lanka	PCRV	2013	Post-Tsunami Livelihoods Support and Partnership Programme	APR	4.7	RURAL	19/04/2005	26/06/2012	3	0.721
24	Uruguay	PPA	2013	Uruguay Rural	LAC	14	AGRIC	07/12/2000	11/03/2013	5	0.691
25	Bangladesh	PPA	2014	Microfinance and Technical Support Project in Bangladesh	APR	20.1	CREDI	02/12/2004	24/04/2012	5	0.681
26	Bhutan	PPA	2014	Agriculture, Marketing and Enterprise Promotion Programme	APR	13.9	RURAL	19/04/2005	07/03/2014	4	
27	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	PPA	2014	Management of Natural Resources in the Chaco and High Valley Regions Project	LAC	12	RSRCH	13/09/2000	22/07/2014	4	0.686
28	China	CPE	2014	Overall	APR					5	0.687
29	Ecuador	CPE	2014	Overall	LAC	14.8		02/12/2004	31/12/2014	4	0.704
30	Ghana	PCRV	2014	Rural Enterprises Project - Phase Two	WCA	11.24	RSRCH	05/09/2002	10/03/2014	5	0.681
31	Guatemala	PCRV	2014	National Rural Development Programme Phase I: the Western Region	LAC	30	RURAL	11/09/2003	29/08/2013	2	0.623
32	Jordan	CPE	2014	Overall	NEN					3	0.612
33	Senegal	CPE	2014	Overall	WCA	12.5		10/04/2003	10/01/2013	4	0.657
34	Sudan	PPA	2014	Gash Sustainable Livelihoods Regeneration Project	NEN	24.9	AGRIC	18/12/2003	14/10/2013	5	
35	Uganda	PCRV	2014	Vegetable Oil Development Project	ESA	20	AGRIC	29/04/1997	23/12/2013	4	0.722
36	Viet Nam	PCRV	2014	Improving Market Participation of the Poor (IMPP)	APR	26	RURAL	14/09/2006	24/06/2013	5	0.673
37	Viet Nam	PCRV	2014	Decentralized Programme for Rural Poverty Reduction in Ha Giang and Quang Binh Provinces	APR	24.1	AGRIC	02/12/2004	31/08/2012	5	0.673
38	Yemen	PCRV	2014	Al Mahara Rural Development Project (AMRDP)	NEN	12.25	RURAL	09/12/1999	06/04/2012	5	0.487
39	Yemen	PCRV	2014	Dhamar Participatory Rural Development Project (DPRDP)	NEN	14.01	RURAL	05/09/2002	30/06/2013	6	0.487
40	Zambia	CPE	2014	Overall	ESA	15.9		09/12/1999	20/12/2010	4	0.630

N°	Country	Evaluation product	Year of publication	Evaluation title	Region	IFAD cofinancing (USD millions)	Subsector	Approval	Closing	IOE GEWE rating	Global Gender Gap composite index 2011
41	Bangladesh	PCRV	2015	Market Infrastructure Development Project in Charland Regions (MIDPCR)	APR	24.95	RURAL	13/12/2005	22/07/2014	5	0.681
42	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	CPE	2015	Overall	LAC					4	0.686
43	Brazil	PPA	2015	Rural Communities Development Project in the Poorest Areas of the State of Bahia	LAC	30.5	RURAL	20/04/2006	30/01/2014	5	0.668
44	Burkina Faso	PCRV	2015	Sustainable Rural Development Programme (PDRD)	WCA	16.03	AGRIC	02/12/2004	30/06/2014	5	0.615
45	Ethiopia	PCRV	2015	Agricultural Marketing Improvement Programme (AMIP)	ESA	27.2	MRKTG	02/12/2004	30/06/2014	2	0.614
46	India	PPA	2015	Livelihood Improvement Project for the Himalayas	APR	39.92	CREDI	18/12/2003	17/12/2013	5	0.619
47	India	Impact evaluation	2015	Jharkhand – Chhattisgarh Tribal Development Programme	APR	23	RURAL	29/04/1999	14/01/2013	4	0.619
48	Mozambique	PCRV	2015	Rural Finance Support Programme (RFSP)	ESA	9.46	CREDI	17/12/2003	29/05/2015	5	0.725
49	Niger	PCRV	2015	Agricultural and Rural Rehabilitation and Development Initiative Project - Institutional Strengthening Component	WCA	8	RURAL	17/12/2008	28/10/2014	5	
50	Pakistan	PPA	2015	Community Development Programme	APR	21.77	RURAL	18/12/2003	30/06/2014	5	0.558
51	Pakistan	PCRV	2015	Programme for Increasing Sustainable Microfinance (PRISM)	APR	35.01	CREDI	12/09/2007	26/06/2014	4	0.558
52	Rwanda	PCRV	2015	Smallholder Cash and Export Crops Development Project	ESA	16.26	AGRIC MRKTG	11/12/2002	12/04/2013	4	
53	Sri Lanka	PCRV	2015	Post-Tsunami Coastal Rehabilitation and Resource Management Programme (PT-CRRreMP)	APR	14.2	FISH	19/04/2005	26/11/2014	4	0.721
54	Yemen	PCRV	2015	Pilot Community-Based Rural Infrastructure Project For Highland Areas	NEN	9	RURAL	19/04/2005	07/04/2015	4	0.487
55	Zambia	PCRV	2015	Rural Finance Programme	ESA	13.8	CREDI	02/12/2004	31/03/2014	5	0.630
56	Bangladesh	CPE	2016	Overall	APR					5	0.681
57	Ethiopia	CPE	2016	Overall	WCA					5	0.614

Source: IFAD GRIPS; IOE evaluation database; Global Gender Gap report 2011, table 3.b: detailed rankings, 2011.



## Typology of strategies, interventions, practices and results



## IFAD GEWE transformation index and analysis

### GEWE transformation index

1. The synthesis systematically reviewed the interventions included in the sample, using the evaluation questions for this synthesis. The reviewers recorded all findings and observations using an evaluation matrix template. They finally located the interventions within the GEWE Transformation Index developed for this synthesis (below). The index is based on the six-scale gender marker system developed by the PTA Gender Desk, but has a greater focus on transformative gender results. For this synthesis, the definitions for specific markers such as transformative (= 6) have been unpacked and linked to the applicable IOE evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability). This has enabled the synthesis to achieve a more nuanced assessment of GEWE practices as well as their outcomes.

Table 1  
IFAD GEWE Transformation Index

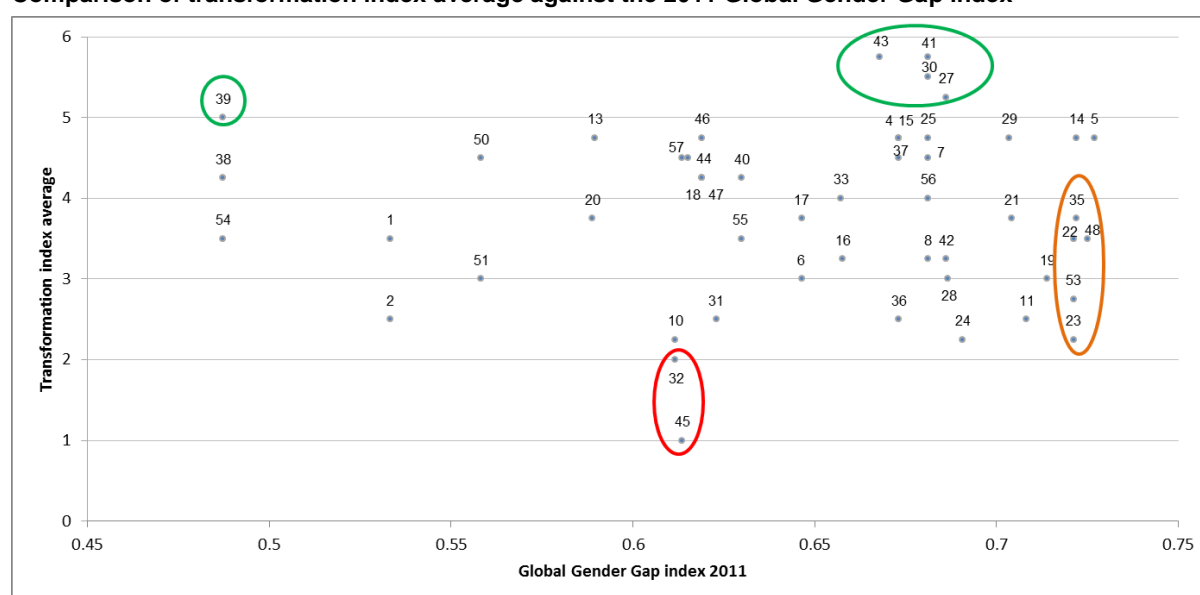
IOE Evaluation Criteria	Assessment criteria		Indicators	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Relevance</b>	Relevance of GEWE strategy		Contextualised strategy addresses drivers of exclusion, discrimination and/or unequal power relations	No	Strategy addresses 1 of 3 types of drivers (exclusion, discrimination, or unequal power relations)	Strategy addresses 2 of 3 types of drivers (exclusion, discrimination, or unequal power relations)	Strategy addresses GEWE-specific drivers	Strategy addresses drivers across multiple domains	Strategy <b>holistically</b> addresses drivers across multiple domains
<b>Effectiveness</b>	GEWE intervention results		Successful contribution to GEWE policy	no benefits	failed to target women	No significant contribution	Contribution to one <b>GEWE policy objectives</b>	<b>Contribution to two GEWE policy objectives</b>	Contribution to <b>all three gender policy objectives</b>
	Changes of behaviour, norms, roles or institutions	Depth of change	Changes of behaviour etc.	No change detected				Some changes reported	Significant changes reported
<b>Impact</b>		Scale of change	Changes beyond immediate beneficiaries	No change detected				Significant changes within projects	Far reaching <b>changes</b> beyond project beneficiaries
	Root causes		Intervention addresses roots of gender inequality and powerlessness	Root causes not addressed				Addresses some root causes	Multiple root causes addressed
	Equitable poverty outcomes		Socially, culturally, economically equitable outcomes	Highly unequal outcomes	Unequal, some groups remain excluded	Unequal, but majority benefits somehow	Mostly equitable, only few remain excluded	Equitable outcomes	Highly <b>equitable outcomes</b> for hard to reach women
<b>Sustainability</b>	Sustainability of change introduced by the intervention		Impact is sustainable in the long term	Not sustainable	Financial support of interventions likely to continue	Activities likely continue	Project initiated processes and institutions likely to continue	Structural changes are likely to continue	Changes <b>sustainable in the long term</b>

2. Each sampled intervention was given a score along the four IOE evaluation criteria, and an average score was calculated (presented below). The index is primarily a tool for comparative analysis; it is not about benchmarking performance scores.

### GEWE transformation index and context analysis

3. This section compares the transformational index scores against the 2011 Global Gender Gap (GGG) index for each country in the sample.

Figure 1  
Comparison of transformation index average against the 2011 Global Gender Gap index



Source: Data in annex X.B; Global Gender Gap report 2011, table 3.b: detailed rankings, 2011.

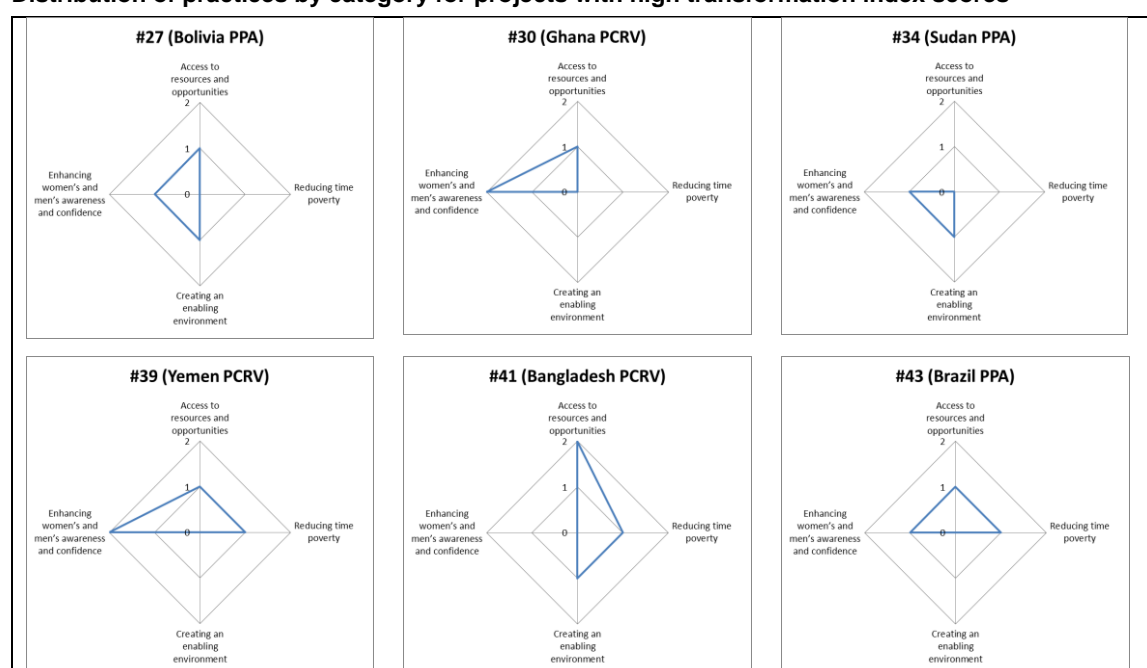
Note: Global Gender Gap index for Bhutan, Haiti, Niger, Rwanda and Sudan are not available.

4. Although this analysis is not conducive because there is no direct causal link between context and the level of transformation supported, it still enables us to identify certain patterns, some of them are circled. For example, it suggests that IFAD interventions seem to be more likely to support transformational results within a favourable policy and institutional context. Comparison of average transformation scores against the relevant country's GGG index indicates that those interventions with the highest scores were found in countries with a relatively high GGG index (#27 in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, #30 in Ghana, #41 in Bangladesh, and #43 in Brazil, circled in green). But, there is one important outlier (#39, circled in green) found at the opposite end of the GGG index spectrum, in Yemen, which shows that the IFAD-type of intervention, in principle, is able to support transformative GEWE practices even in challenging contexts. With regard to the lower scores it should be noted that those are clustered in countries with a higher GGG index (i.e. #22, #23, and #53 in Sri Lanka, #35 in Uganda, and #48 in Mozambique, circled in orange). Even those interventions with the lowest scores (#45 in Ethiopia and #32 in Jordan, circled in red) were not located in the most challenging contexts.

#### Comparison of the highest scoring interventions against the lowest

5. The following six interventions have achieved an average score of 5 or more and are thus considered as transformations. These are, in descending order, #34 (Sudan PPA); #41 (Bangladesh PCR); #43 (Brazil PPA); #30 (Ghana PCR); #27 (Plurinational State of Bolivia PPA); and #39 (Yemen PCR).

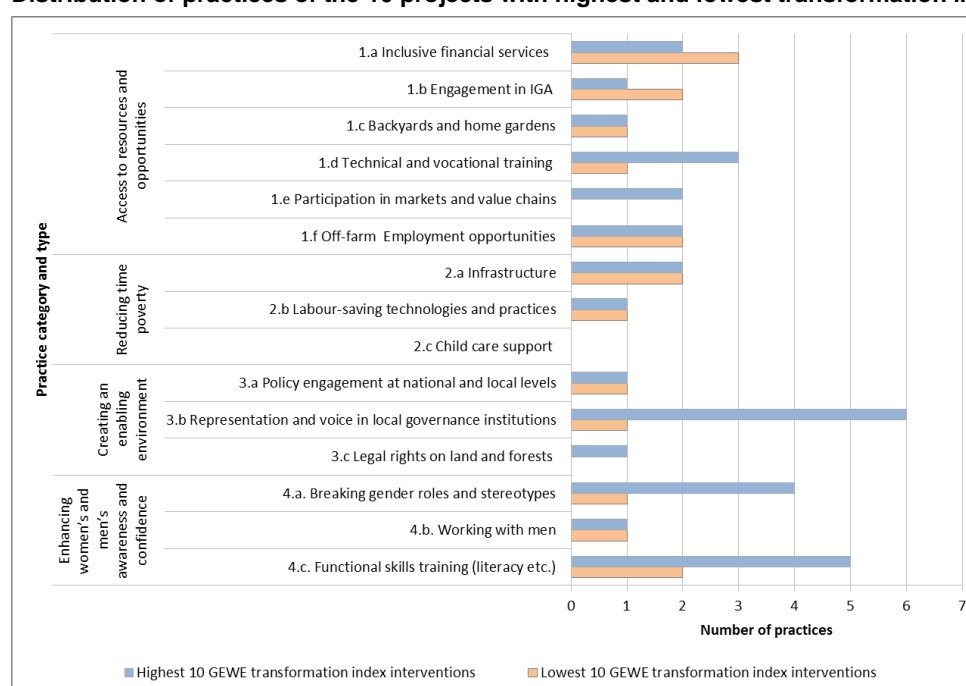
**Figure 2**  
**Distribution of practices by category for projects with high transformation index scores**



Source: compiled from data in table 2.

6. The six interventions have used different types of GEWE practices and in different combinations. Five of six interventions contained practices in category 4 (enhance women's and men's awareness, consciousness and confidence), and two practices were repeated across interventions, namely functional skills training (#30 and #39), and breaking gender roles and stereotypes (#27, #30, #39 and #43). Category 1, access to resources and opportunities, appeared in five of the six interventions. Here, there was a broad range of practices represented, with only one practice repeated twice. This was in technical and vocational training (#27 and #39). Both these practices correlated with the previously mentioned practice of breaking gender roles and stereotypes. Category 2, practices that focus on reducing time poverty, and category 3, creating an enabling environment, only appear in three interventions, in conjunction with practices across all other categories. Another feature of these interventions was that seem to have a higher number of GEWE practices, on average of 2.9 practices compared to the average of 1.9 practices among all remaining interventions. This does not mean that more practices lead to more transformation however.
7. The following analysis compared the distribution of practices of the 10 interventions with the highest transformational index score against the 10 interventions with the lowest transformational index score. The results are presented in figure 3 below.

**Figure 3**  
**Distribution of practices of the 10 projects with highest and lowest transformation index score**



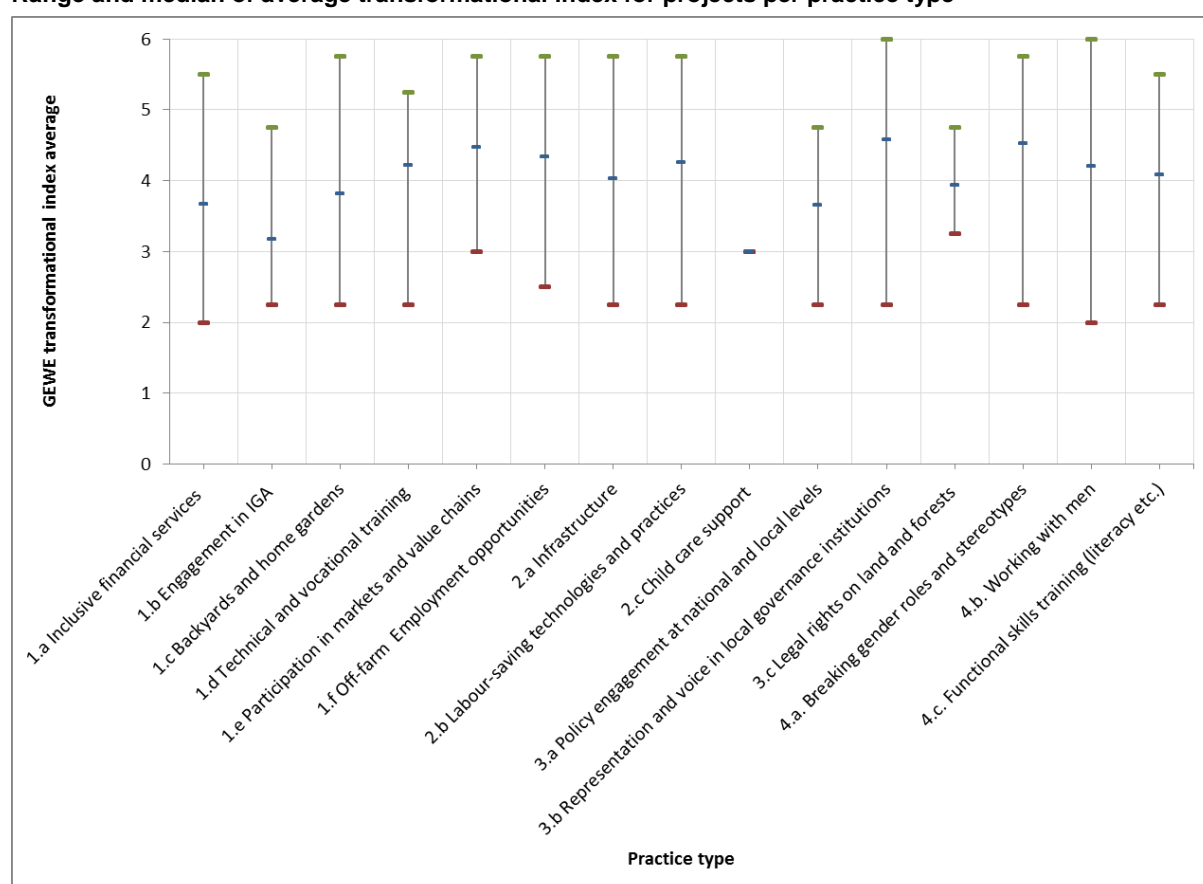
Source: compiled from data in table 2 below.

8. The top 10 index group contain 32 practices, while the bottom 10 group contain 16 practices. As can be seen in the figure above, within the top 10 group we found a wider range of practices (13 out of 15 types covered), and in particular more practices of category 1 (Access to resources and opportunities) and category 4 (Enhancing women's and men's awareness and confidence). Within the latter category the high number of practices in the breaking gender roles and stereotypes and functional skills training types stand out. In the bottom 10 group we found the highest incidence of practices in category 1's rural finance, but there are far more absences of some empowering practices. These include participation in markets and value chains, off-farm employment opportunities, child care support and legal rights for land and forests.

### **Comparison of average transformational index scores across practice types**

9. The following analysis explores the relationship between the average transformational index score for all interventions and the individual practice types across the entire sample (see figure 4 below). This provides us with a broader picture on which practices are associated with more transformative interventions.

Figure 4  
Range and median of average transformational index for projects per practice type



Source: compiled from data in table 2 below.

10. The practice types associated with the highest average transformation index scores are technical training and vocation, participation in markets and value chains, and representation and voice in local governance institutions. These practices were effective, usually in combination with other practices, on average 3.2 practices. Practice types associated with the lowest transformation scores were childcare support, engagement in IGAs, inclusive financial services, and policy engagement at national and local levels. They were found less effective because they were applied as single practices or in combination with fewer practices. While this analysis does not presuppose that practices are more effective per se, it does give an indication of which practices have been more effectively applied.

#### **GEWE transformational index and GEWE practices**

11. The following section presents two tables that provides the data for subsequent analysis in this annex. The table below presents the scores achieved according to the GEWE transformational index for each reviewed evaluation in the sample.

Table 2

GEWE Transformation Index – average score and GEWE practices per category, identified for review sample

N°	Country	Evaluation product	Transformation index score					Practice categories and types identified by synthesis review															Sum of practices
			Relevance	Effectiveness	Poverty impact	Sustainability	Average	1.a Inclusive financial services	1.b engagement in IGA	1.c Backyards and home gardens	1.d Technical and vocational training	1.e Markets and value chains	1.f Off-farm employment	2.a Infrastructure	2.b Labour-saving technologies	2.c Child care support	3.a Policy engagement	3.b Representation and voice	3.c Rights on land and forests	4.a Breaking stereotypes	4.b Working with men	4.c Functional skills training	
34	Sudan	PPA	6	6	6	6	6										1			1			2
41	Bangladesh	PCRv	6	6	6	5	5.8					1	1	1			1						4
43	Brazil	PPA	6	6	5	6	5.8			1				1						1			3
30	Ghana	PCRv	6	5	5	6	5.5	1											1		1		3
27	Bolivia	PPA	5	6	6	4	5.3				1						1			1			3
39	Yemen	PCRv	6	5	6	3	5				1			1					1		1		4
4	Viet Nam	PPA	5	5	5	4	4.8	1									1	1					3
5	Burundi	PPA	4	5	6	4	4.8									1	1					1	3
12	Rwanda	CPE	6	4	6	3	4.8		1			1					1					1	4
13	Syria	PCRv	5	5	5	4	4.8				1		1									1	4
14	Uganda	PPA	5	5	5	4	4.8	1						1			1			1			4
15	Viet Nam	CPE	5	5	5	4	4.8										1						1
25	Bangladesh	PPA	4	6	6	3	4.8	1			1									1			3
29	Ecuador	CPE	6	5	5	3	4.8	1									1			1	1		4
46	India	PPA	6	5	5	3	4.8	1				1			1		1				1	1	6
7	Ghana	CPE	6	4	5	3	4.5					1		1									2
37	Viet Nam	PCRv	4	6	4	4	4.5										1						1
44	Burkina Faso	PCRv	3	5	5	5	4.5			1	1									1		1	4
50	Pakistan	PPA	4	5	5	4	4.5	1									1			1			3
57	Ethiopia	CPE	4	4	5	5	4.5																0
18	India	PPA	4	6	4	3	4.3	1									1			1			3
38	Yemen	PCRv	4	4	6	3	4.3										1						1
40	Zambia	CPE	5	5	4	3	4.3					1											1
47	India	Impact evaluation	6	4	4	3	4.3							1			1			1			3
52	Rwanda	PCRv	5	4	4	4	4.3					1											1
33	Senegal	CPE	4	5	5	2	4									1							1
56	Bangladesh	CPE	4	4	5	3	4											1					1
17	Cambodia	PPA	4	5	3	3	3.8									1							1
20	Nepal	CPE	3	4	4	4	3.8							1		1		1					3
21	Panama	PCRv	6	3	3	3	3.8										1					1	2
35	Uganda	PCRv	2	5	5	3	3.8	1	1														2
1	Chad	PCRv	2	3	4	5	3.5															1	1
22	Sri Lanka	Impact evaluation	3	4	5	2								1									2
48	Mozambique	PCRv	2	4	4	4	3.5	1												1			2
54	Yemen	PCRv	3	2	5	4	3.5																0
55	Zambia	PCRv	2	3	4	5	3.5	1															1
8	Ghana	PPA	2	4	3	4	3.3	1															1

N°	Country	Evaluation product	Transformation index score					Practice categories and types identified by synthesis review															
			Relevance	Effectiveness	Poverty impact	Sustainability	Average	1.a Inclusive financial services	1.b engagement in IGA	1.c Backyards and home gardens	1.d Technical and vocational training	1.e Markets and value chains	1.f Off-farm employment	2.a Infrastructure	2.b Labour-saving technologies	2.c Child care support	3.a Policy engagement	3.b Representation and voice	3.c Rights on land and forests	4.a Breaking stereotypes	4.b Working with men	4.c Functional skills training	Sum of practices
16	Azerbaijan	PPA	4	4	2	3	3.3	1										1				2	
42	Bolivia	CPE	2	5	5	1	3.3															0	
6	Cambodia	PPA	3	5	3	1	3												1			1	
19	Mongolia	PPA	4	3	3	2	3								1							1	
28	China	CPE	3	3	3	3	3				1					1					1	3	
49	Niger	PCRv	2	3	3	4	3	1	1													2	
51	Pakistan	PCRv	3	4	3	2	3	1				1					1					3	
9	Haiti	PCRv	3	2	3	3	2.8	1														1	
53	Sri Lanka	PCRv	3	3	2	3	2.8	1	1	1												3	
2	Chad	PCRv	1	2	2	5	2.5							1							1	2	
11	Moldova	PPA	2	2	2	4	2.5	1						1								2	
31	Guatemala	PCRv	5	2	2	1	2.5		1													1	
36	Viet Nam	PCRv	3	2	2	3	2.5															0	
10	Jordan	PPA	5	2	1	1	2.3		1		1						1				1	4	
23	Sri Lanka	PCRv	3	2	2	2	2.3			1				1								2	
24	Uruguay	PPA	2	2	2	3	2.3									1			1			2	
26	Bhutan	PPA	2	2	3	2	2.3	1							1							2	
32	Jordan	CPE	2	3	2	1	2	1												1		2	
45	Ethiopia	PCRv	1	1	1	1	1															0	
3	Kenya	CPE						1						1								2	
Total			3.9	4.0	4.0	3.3	3.8	22	6	4	7	7	2	10	3	1	8	16	4	12	6	12	121
Average			3.9	4.0	4.0	3.3	3.8																

\* For categories, refer to Chapter IV B and figure 8 in the main report.

Source: composed by team data analysis on sampled review



## Case studies

<i>Country</i>	<i>Project name</i>	<i>Case study number</i>	<i>GEWE practices</i>
Chad	Kanem Rural Development Project	#2	2.a; 4.c
Viet Nam	Rural Income Diversification Project in Tuyen Quang Province (RIDP)	#4	1.a; 3.b; 3.c
Burundi	Rural Recovery and Development Programme (PRDMR)	#5	3.a; 3.b; 4.d
Rwanda	Rural Small and Microenterprise Promotion Project Phase II (PPMER II)	#12	1.b; 1.e; 3.b; 4.d
Syrian Arab Republic	Badia Rangelands Development Project (BRDP)	#13	1.d; 1.f; 4.d
Uganda	Area-based Agricultural Modernization Programme (AAMP)	#14	1.a; 2.a; 4.a; 4.c
Mongolia	Rural Poverty Reduction Programme	#19	2.c
Sri Lanka	Dry Zone Livelihood Support and Partnerships Programme	#22	1.a; 2.a
Ecuador	Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian Development Project (PRODEPINE)	#29	1.a; 4.a; 4.b; 4.c
Ghana	Rural Enterprises Project, phase II (REP II)	#30	1.a; 4.b; 4.c
Senegal	Agricultural Development Project in Matam – Phase II (PRODAM II)	#33	3.a
Sudan	Gash Sustainable Livelihoods Regeneration Project (GSLRP)	#34	3.b; 4.a; 4.c
Uganda	Vegetable Oil Development Project (VODP)	#35	1.a; 1.b
Yemen	Al Mahara Rural Development Project (AMRDP) and Dhamar Participatory Rural Development Project (DPRDP)*	#38/39	1.d; 2.a; 3.b; 4.b; 4.d
Yemen	Dhamar Participatory Rural Development Project (DPRDP)	#39	1.d; 2.a; 4.b; 4.d
Zambia	Smallholder Enterprise and Marketing Programme	#40	1.e
Bangladesh	Market Infrastructure Development Project in Charland Regions (MIDPCR)	#41	1.e; 1.f; 2.a; 4.a
Brazil	Rural Communities Development Project in the Poorest Areas of the State of Bahia	#43	1.c; 2.b; 4.b
Burkina Faso	Sustainable Rural Development Programme (PDRD)	#44	1.c; 1.d; 4.b; 4.d
India	Livelihoods Improvement Project in the Himalayas	#46	1.a; 1.e; 2.b; 3.a; 4.c; 4.d

\* The case study focuses on an activity (community development associations) that was initiated under AMRDP and developed further under DPRDP. It is for this reason that both projects are discussed within a single case study.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Chad</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Kanem Rural Development Project</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>2000 - 2012</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Rural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>PCRv</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, Sri Lanka ranked 134 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.5334 (ranking 98 in economic participation, 107 in political empowerment, 111 in health and survival and 135 in educational attainment). Chad remains one of the world's poorest countries. Poverty is most severe in rural areas. About 80 per cent of the population depend on farming or herding or gathering forest products for a livelihood (UNDP Human Development Report, 2012). Women form the backbone of the rural economy. They work in the fields and tend livestock, and they are also responsible for most household chores. As a result of mortality and male migration, women now outnumber men, and about 23 per cent of households are headed by women (ibid). These households are particularly vulnerable to poverty.
2. **Strategy:** The project's main objective was to improve the incomes and food security of poor households in the region. One of the four project objectives was to provide specific support to women and young people through income-generating activities. However, women were also targeted in relation to the other project objectives to: develop sustainable microfinance services, empower the target populations and their organizations and increase agricultural productivity. Gender issues are not clearly mainstreamed throughout the project logic and operations but they are targeted through several activities.
3. **Activity/ies:** Activities to improve gender equality comprised participatory village development plans, livelihoods' training, drinking-water supply infrastructure, literacy and agricultural extension services. Other project activities included developing microfinance services and irrigation.
4. **Outputs:** The project was implemented over 3.5 years instead of 8 following the early closure of the project owing to major difficulties. The project reached 9 per cent or 8,560 people out of the planned 95,000 people. Village development plans were prepared in 147 out of 158 villages selected. This helped beneficiaries to better understand their own needs for development (the extent to which women's participation was promoted and supported is not clear). In addition, 63 Ouadis development plans and 21 inter-village development plans were made but not implemented. In 2008/2009, the project put in place the necessary conditions to start a vast literacy training programme (needs identification, training of trainers, preparation of training material, facilities refurbished) and successfully started implementing literacy training (with higher numbers of women participants than expected) until the project closed soon after. Agricultural extension auxiliaries numbering 164 were trained, of whom 50 per cent were women. Thirty-six out of a target of 45 artisans for rural hydraulic infrastructure received training and a total of 50 boreholes and 31 wells were constructed/rehabilitated.
5. **Impact:** The impact of project activities is not clear beyond the output level. A few of the project activities implemented were reported to have raised household incomes for some of the beneficiaries: women in women's groups that received training in small livestock production (chicken, goats) and the storage of onions; as well as local craftsmen who were trained on borehole drilling, well construction and the repair of motor pumps; input providers who were given interest free loans; and local farmers who participated in tests on irrigation techniques and vegetable production.

6. **Sustainability:** It appears that women benefited from the improved water infrastructure, training in small livestock, literacy training and village development plans. With the early closure of the project owing to major difficulties in implementation, these activities were unlikely to be sustained.
7. **Success factors:** In the challenging context of rural Chad, the participatory process through which the development plans emerged was an important success.
8. **Agents of change:** Unclear.
9. **Limitations:** Implementation period of three years instead of eight. An overambitious and complex project design and weak implementation capacity of the project management unit were in part responsible for the weak performance of the project. A few interventions aimed to tackle some of the underlying causes of gender inequality and women's poverty but overall the project was too complex and demanding given the local context.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Viet Nam</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Rural Income Diversification Project in Tuyen Quang Province (RIDP)</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>2001-2011</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Rural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>PPA</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, Viet Nam ranked 79 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.6732 (ranking 40 in economic participation, 76 in political empowerment, 130 in health and survival and 104 in educational attainment). Viet Nam is advanced in protecting women's rights legally, but the practical application of this is weak in rural areas where social norms regarding women's roles and rights are more traditional. Forest land is the major natural resource in the province, but it was controlled and protected by the Government so farmers were unable to take advantage of forest resources to raise their standards of living and were limited to subsistence-level farming on small marginal farms.
2. **Strategy:** The project aimed to improve the socio-economic status of 49,000 poor households living in upland areas, especially ethnic minorities and women, by increasing their capacity for, and role in, decision-making, enhancing food security, promoting the diversification of rural income opportunities, and encouraging the sustainable use of natural resources. Although RIDP became effective a year before the Gender Plan of Action (GPoA) was in force, the gender strategy to mainstream gender through all component activities (and project management) meant that all three GPoA objectives were addressed on assets and income, decision-making and well-being.
3. Gender-related objectives included:
  - Increasing women's access to and ownership and control of productive resources, mainly through promoting the joint titling of husband and wife on forest land use certificates (FLUCs);
  - Increasing women's access to financial services through development of saving-credit groups, pro-poor microfinance institutions and services;
  - Empowering women to increase their community management capacities;
  - Empowering women to negotiate more favourable terms in the gender distribution of labour;
  - Enhancing women's visibility as economic agents, thereby improving their position in the community and household;
  - Combating domestic violence through social mobilization; and
  - Gender awareness training for men.
4. **Activity/ies:** Joint FLUCs were set up for two main reasons: to correct gender-based discrimination on access to and control of forest resources; and to create a mechanism to improve the sustainable use of forest resources by households.
5. **Outputs:** In supporting of the issuance of FLUCs, the project helped in the preparation of maps, review and collection of data obtained from remote sensing imagery in the field, and registration of cadastral documents in 66 communes. Over the project period, 40,000 FLUCs (against a target of 49,000) covering 50,300 hectares were awarded to 26,000 households. Establishing FLUCs addressed weakly protected rights for women and helped formally recognize their ownership of forest land and resources.

6. **Impacts:** The FLUCs are reported to have led to the diversification of target households' income sources as farmers started or increased the productive use of forest resources, for example by farming, growing non-timber forest products and producing bamboo chopsticks and handicrafts. The project intervention raised villagers' awareness of the importance of conserving natural resources and improved the sustainable use of forest resources, for example by investing in tree plantations. There was also less illegal logging in the special-use and protection of forests, as the allocated forest areas provided timber, fuelwood and non-timber forest products to meet household needs. The initial impact assessment showed that the forest coverage rate of the province increased from 62 per cent to 69 per cent between 2004 and 2007, although this achievement should be partly attributed to the Government's policies and programmes for reclassifying the use of forest lands.
7. **Sustainability:** The PPA states that forest land economic activities supported by the project are very likely to be maintained and further improved by the village groups and households due to the increased market access and growing local market demands. Favourable market prices of timber and pulp wood are also important variables. Forest land management should be ensured as land use is protected by certificates for long-term use, although farmers may need additional technical support. Analysis of the gendered differences of the activity over time was not available.
8. **Success factors:** The Government's commitment to privatization. The 2002 COSOP made a concerted effort to develop a gender strategy to address the strategic and practical needs of rural women, thereby increasing the impact of project interventions on poverty and gender inequalities. The confluence of multiple and complementary project activities to promote gender equality and women's empowerment appears to have been an important factor in challenging local gender roles and responsibilities (for example, compared to before the project women spend less time on rice production and more on rice selling, husbands have started to support their wives with domestic work at home, and women participate more in social activities).
9. **Agents of change:** Not clear
10. **Limitations:** The number of women with FLUC titles is not clear, nor is it clear the degree of control women had of the forest land and its products (in relation to the men in their family). The number of FLUCs issued was less than planned owing to the time required to respond to the Government's reclassification of forest lands, which called for an assessment of the value of forest trees on each parcel of land. The PPA does not explore power relations between men and women in a household, where a woman may be the de-facto co-owner of the forest resource, but her access to and control of the resource is actually restricted by a male relative.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Burundi</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Rural Recovery and Development Programme (PRDMR)</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>1999-2011</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Rural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>PPA</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, Burundi ranked 24 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.727 (ranking 4 in economic participation, 32 in political empowerment, 98 in health and survival and 119 in educational attainment). Yet Burundi is one of the poorest countries of the world. After 10 years of conflict, worsened by a regional economic embargo and a freeze on aid by development partners at the end of the 1990s, the productive assets in the country were decimated. The economy is highly dependent on agriculture (35 per cent of GDP and 87 per cent of exports).
2. **Strategy:** The project aimed to enable the rural poor and their communities to develop and implement sustainable individual and collective strategies to overcome what they perceived as the main obstacles to improving food security and income. It also aimed to reduce the pressure on livelihoods that had so persistently contributed to social tension. The project aimed to improve women's social status through project components on community development and socio-economic infrastructure development. Gender considerations are less apparent in the components on natural resource development and conservation and on-farm agriculture support. Women and women-headed households were identified as important subtarget groups in the project targeting strategy.
3. **Activity/ies:** Project activities targeting women and men or women in particular included participatory planning through community development committees (CDCs) and the training involved (on accounting, the role of CDCs, understanding the institutional context, conflict resolution, and how to target beneficiaries), the literacy programme, sensitization to women's rights, women-leader networks, traditional community conflict resolution (Bashingantahe), family development centres, social infrastructure (drinking-water supplies and health centres) and supporting the bovine value chains and fruit markets.
4. **Outputs:** The community-driven development (CDD) approach was initially met with some resistance but it was later rolled out across the country. The Government issued a decree in which the CDCs were legally recognized in composition, mission and function. In collaboration with other donors, including ACORD, Action Aid, and GTZ (German Technical Cooperation Agency) the project contributed to formulating a national guide to community planning.
5. The project supported the establishment of 799 *collines* (hill development committees) with 8,933 members and 33 communal committees for community development with 822 members. Women represented around 30 per cent of the members. Through the participatory planning process 33 communal plans for community development and four provincial community development plans were elaborated, representing the intervention priorities identified by the communes. Those plans contributed to the mobilization of external financing from development partners and supported coordination and equitable distribution. One province saw 50 per cent of women leaders becoming members of hill development councils. In total 845 women became rural leaders, dealing with women's issues in the post-conflict context and they had earned respect at the community level.

6. Other outputs included family development centres created in four project area provinces and 33 communes, health care facilities built serving 62,632 people, drinking-water supplies for 23,639 people and latrines built in schools serving 24,750 students (data not disaggregated by gender).
7. In the literacy programme, 880 literacy trainers were recruited and trained (compared to a target of 379), 513 literacy trainers were retrained (compared to a target of 379); 62,485 literacy students (of whom 43,115 were women) enrolled (compared to a target of 43,000), 50,437 students became more literate (compared to a target of 38,700) and 39,889 students were certified literate (compared to a target of 34,400).
8. **Impacts:** Women have improved their decision-making roles in community affairs and their representation in local institutions. Women now present themselves in local elections and are chosen to lead in development committees, such as the hill development committees and as administrators. The number of women members and administrators of committees has grown. In 2001, there were no female communal administrators, in 2005 this had risen to 8, then 12 out of 33 communes by 2010. Furthermore, women-leader networks were effective and worked alongside Bashingantahes and hill development committees in conflict resolution. The emergence of rural women leaders has greatly contributed to changing the status of women within the communities and has helped to address issues concerning women and child protection. They play an important role in dealing with social conflicts and the sensitization of communities on women's rights and gender equality.
9. Literacy training is reported to have improved women's access to income-generating activities (including sewing, basket making, milling, veterinary pharmacy, petty trade, etc.) and overall economic situation.
10. Family development centres evolved to provide social and legal assistance to families improving social cohesion. Women expressed themselves more freely and did not hesitate to protect their interests.
11. Through the success of multiple activities targeting women's needs and priorities, women reported improved self-esteem, more control over family assets (especially land) alongside their husbands, improved confidence to voice their concerns in meetings and generally, greater respect shown from within the community.
12. **Sustainability:** By focusing its approach on participatory community development, the programme contributed significantly to addressing the issues of ownership and local capacity-building – crucial conditions for sustainability. The programme has put in place several management units at the local level that can continue with the participatory planning, provided they continue receiving the support from the decentralized governmental structures, which is likely given the legal recognition of the community development approach. A challenge to the sustainability of CDCs is the bringing in of new members who benefited less from project training and sensitization. Follow-up projects supported by IFAD could continue to support the CDCs.
13. The income-generating activities supported by the women leaders networks still required institutional support by project completion. Another potential issue was that literacy trainers and women leaders worked on a voluntary basis and without project support their motivation to continue could falter.
14. **Success factors:** Community development project designed and implemented in a highly participatory manner. Rural men and women played a key role in defining the pace and direction during implementation. The project addressed multiple dimensions of vulnerability and poverty (women-led households; families with small land-holdings; families without monetary income; families who have suffered violence).

15. **Agents of change:** The rural women leaders and the CDCs.
16. **Limitations:** It is reported that women did not benefit from any direct support in the area of agricultural production (crop, livestock production) despite the fact that they are the heads of one third of the households. Reports lack gender-disaggregated data at impact level and general information on how gender-related activities functioned.



<b>Country</b>	<b>Rwanda</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Rural small and microenterprise promotion project phase II (PPMER II)</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>2003-2013</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Rural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>CPE and PCRVR</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2014, Rwanda ranked 7 out of 142 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.785 (ranking 25 in economic participation, 6 in political empowerment, 118 in health and survival and 114 in educational attainment).<sup>1</sup> Further, while gender gaps are low in the economic sphere, the level of poverty of women and men is high. In rural areas and in agriculture, women play a particularly important role but need access to resources, inputs, capacities and markets. The CPE observes that 27 per cent of households in Rwanda are headed by women, and these households are not only vulnerable to poverty, but exploitation.
2. **Strategy:** The project was designed to deal with the most vulnerable, which, in the particular context of Rwanda included women, women-headed households, households headed by children and orphans. The gender focus was therefore strong from the outset. The project aimed in particular at providing off-farm income opportunities and group leadership positions to women, particularly for women-/child-headed households and orphans. Participatory approaches were applied to both recovering communities (in post-conflict context) and local government structures for the purpose of social reconstruction and enhanced cohesion.
3. **Activity/ies:** The project sought to create value chains in coffee and in particular to brand the coffee of women producers "cafés des femmes", and link it to the fair trade market. Project components were capacity-building, support to rural SMEs and support to microfinance institutions.
4. **Outputs:** The CPE observes that women were more than half of the apprentices trained in management, marketing and accounting related to enterprises in the project.
5. **Impact:** Microenterprise interventions (PPMER II) have reached out to the poor rural women and expanded their access to markets and income. Linkages were made between women coffee producers and fair trade organizations and gourmet markets for organic coffee. Café des femmes fetched a high price on the market. Women coffee producers' income increased (no data provided).
6. Overall, the project has strengthened human capacity through community mobilization, animation, literacy training, and skills transfer with the objective to open up additional off-farm income opportunities for the target group, develop functional businesses (microenterprises and cooperatives) and skills development capacities in rural areas (services providers). Capacities were developed within the public sector, to transfer technologies, business skills, mentoring and start-up capital to microenterprises including economic common interest groups and cooperatives. Capacity-building efforts have also targeted private sector operators (individuals and groups) involved in apprenticeship and business training. As such, individuals and group leaders were both the main recipients and the main provider of capacity-building efforts. More importantly, the project contributed to changing

<sup>1</sup> Data for 2011 to 2013 was not available for Rwanda.

people's mind-set to be more business oriented. They are able to recognize opportunities and to develop strategies to start a business or to improve and further develop existing ones. Women and the youth have greatly benefited from these advances. Particularly good progress was achieved in the mobilization, conduct and confidence of microenterprises and cooperatives, though few have reached self-sufficiency. The project's impact on social cohesion is undeniable.

7. **Sustainability:** Not clear from project reports.
8. **Success factors:** Investing in apprenticeship training, microfinance and organizing women. Further details are required on what conditions the microenterprises worked under. The high economic participation and decision-making of women to begin with may be a contributing factor. The project achieved near parity in women's participation as a result of mainstreaming gender considerations in all aspects of project design and implementation. At design, it was anticipated that 30 per cent of the project beneficiaries would be women, but this target was surpassed to 50 per cent.
9. **Agents of change:** Not clear. The 2007 COSOP may have provided direction and a good starting point by emphasizing the need to target women-headed household, women's participation in projects, women's decision-making and microenterprise activities.
10. **Limitations:** The project almost exclusively focused on the collection of physical output data, while impact monitoring received little to no attention (owing to a weak monitoring and evaluation system) making it difficult to evaluate performance. The CPE noted that the reduction in women's workload was prioritized in some projects and not others, but that in the Rwandan context more work is needed in this area.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Syrian Arab Republic</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Badia Rangelands Development Project (BRDP)</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>1998-2013</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Agricultural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>PCR V</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, the Syrian Arab Republic ranked 124 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.5896 (ranking 129 in economic participation, 110 in political empowerment, 61 in health and survival and 109 in educational attainment). Herding communities were conservative and religious with low levels of education and high rates of illiteracy, in a degraded rangeland context. Women living in herding households played a major role in managing domestic affairs (including water and firewood collection), as well as undertaking various livestock-related tasks, including herding, milking and cleaning the animals' shed or pen. Most women took part in sheep-rearing activities while mainly the older women carried out domestic duties only. Of those that performed domestic and productive work, almost half work 10 hours or more a day and the rest between 5 and 10 hours a day, presumably excluding household chores. Women's contribution to economic activity was mainly for subsistence purposes and tended to be seasonal, with peaks occurring during winter and spring, during the milking and hand-feeding seasons – activities typically undertaken by women. Milk processing was also considered to be the work of women, which added to women's workload during milking seasons. In general there were few opportunities for women to find income-generating opportunities (whether through self-employment or through employment by others).
2. **Strategy:** The project did not have a gender strategy, nor gender-specific objectives or targets. However the component on "Community development" comprised activities for "Women's development" – allocated 3.6 per cent of project costs. In practice, project interventions targeting women spread across two out of the four project components. Although the project targeted women, it does not appear to have systematically mainstreamed gender considerations throughout its operations and activities.
3. **Activity/ies:** Livelihoods training (knitting and textile, handicrafts, food conservation and processing, health and hygiene education) and seasonal labour employment (planting and seed collection). Other activities that directly or indirectly targeted women comprised literacy courses, social infrastructure (roads, water supplies, desalination plants), membership of women in grazing committees and cooperatives, and small credit to women.
4. **Outputs:** The livelihood training courses for women have contributed to improved family care and household savings (e.g. from bottling foods and making preserves, to making clothes for the family and saving on visits to the doctor). Only a very small proportion of women set up small income-generating enterprises. The vast majority neither had the means, nor the intention to start commercial activities after the training.
5. Seasonal labour employment through planting and seed collection led to 27,000 households, mainly unmarried women or those with older children, benefiting from employment opportunities. These were particularly useful for women from non-herder households and proved to be one of the only employment opportunities available to women.
6. Water resources were made available throughout the project area for livestock and drinking water was provided to "selected beneficiaries".

7. **Impact:** Given the challenging context, the project made notable improvements to gender equality and women's empowerment. Seasonal employment through planting and seed collection provided an important source of income for women and poor herdsman. The work also contributed to the rehabilitation of the rangeland. Livelihood training courses, employment opportunities and improved literacy reportedly helped women move towards increased social awareness and self-confidence. Some women realized that they could earn money and take responsibilities alongside their husbands in the household. Overall, it is inferred that higher incomes, greater employment opportunities, improved livestock development (such as higher milk production; healthier animals; higher prolificacy rates) and increased involvement of women in certain food making activities have positively affected food security.
8. **Sustainability:** Seasonal labour employment in rangelands had the potential to continue since the grazing committees and cooperatives were likely to remain functional after project completion. The IGAs of a minority of women would depend on their ability to access local markets yet there are limited local markets to sell their wares.
9. **Success factors:** The confluence of literacy, livelihood training and seasonal employment for women challenged some established gender stereotypes and brought about positive change to reduce poverty.
10. **Agents of change:** The project steering committee included the General Union of Women, but its role or contribution is not further discussed.
11. **Limitations:** From the outset, many women in herding households communicated that they were not eager to add to their current work burdens by doing more traditional work or starting an income-earning activity, especially if this would involve some form of credit. Women prefer to sell surplus milk to travelling cheese-makers rather than process it themselves. Prices for wool were low and there was little incentive for women to process wool and make blankets, pillows, mattresses or cloth to sell. Very few still practiced wool handicrafts, as they once did traditionally, and if they did, it was generally only for home use.
12. In the Sweida and Dara'a provinces, closer to Damascus, women from the project had been trained to produce high quality embroidered products for sale in the city. However they were at the mercy of middlemen who took most of the profits for themselves and help was needed with marketing.
13. Drinking-water supplies were only available to "selected beneficiaries" rather than for all.
14. A potential issue could be strained gender relations when women become sedentary and men remain herders. Women are cut off from herd milk, which can have an impact on household nutrition and food, but as this activity was in particular useful for women from non-herder households, this may not be an issue.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Uganda</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Area-based Agricultural Modernization Programme (AAMP)</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>1999-2010</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Rural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>PPA</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, Uganda ranked 29 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.722 (ranking 42 in economic participation, 25 in political empowerment, 1 in health and survival and 107 in educational attainment). The country's poorest people include hundreds of thousands of smallholder farmers living in remote areas scattered throughout the country. Remoteness makes people poor in as much as it prevents them from benefiting from Uganda's steady economic growth and dynamic modernization. Like most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Uganda is faced with disparities in the gender division of labour within the agriculture sector. Rural Uganda is highly patriarchal. Gender issues, including negative attitudes, mindsets, cultural practices and perceptions, are part of the key binding constraints on economic and social development. Men support customary practices that limit women's access to land and other productive resources.
2. **Strategy:** Unclear from the reports.
3. **Activity/ies:** Interventions that were gender-related included: rural financial services support, including capacity-building for selected savings and credit cooperatives (SACCOs); the market stall rehabilitation scheme; the goat production scheme; the improved rural infrastructure scheme; and engaging men in gender sensitization.
4. The district and subcounty commercial officials helped the SACCOs prepare and monitor business plans, annual reports, accounts and annual audits. The Uganda Cooperative Savings and Credit Union, financed by the IFAD-supported Rural Financial Services Programme supervised and guided the SACCOs under AAMP through monthly visits.
5. **Output:** By programme completion, 35 SACCOs (compared to a target of 32) had received support in the form of training and equipment (a safe, stationary and other small items) to enhance their operational capacity. A total of 29,000 people benefited from this support.
6. The SACCO support was targeted because it was a part of the national microfinance policy framework and Tier 4 regulation. Women comprised 40 per cent (as compared to the target of 50 per cent) of the SACCO members. The groups first received on-farm trials and demonstrations, which made it possible for them to qualify for rural financial support. The demonstrations were important learning stations for farmers to acquire knowledge and skills needed to adopt the new technologies. It is reported that the demonstrations were largely responsible for the high adoption rate of various techniques, namely upland rice in Kabarole, Kanungu and Rukungiri Districts, improved banana management in Ntungamo District, Irish potato growing in Kabale, Kisoro and Mbarara Districts, pineapple growing in Sembabule and Kyenjojo Districts, as well as the adoption of improved goat husbandry in all programme districts. The establishment of SACCOs and the availability of credit helped facilitate farmers' engagement in productive agricultural enterprises. Farmers' groups and associations were now linked to financial services,

especially with regard to potato-, rice- and banana-growing, and in milk-producing areas.

7. **Impact:** AAMP-supported activities including the improved rural financial services through the SACCOs and the rehabilitation of improved roads contributed to improving women's well-being and easing their workloads. More than 17,000 members of the SACCOs had saved a total of UGX 1.42 billion (about US\$700,000) by mid-2008. A significant proportion of loans from SACCOs was used for school fees, allowing more children to enter and stay in school. The impact study also reported better capacity of SACCO members to pay for medical care. Access to financial services had enabled them to manage money and have greater control over resources and access to knowledge. This helped to challenge traditional gender roles and gave women a greater voice in family matters, as well as improved self-esteem and self-confidence. The satisfactory degree to which women were empowered and played more of a decision-making role is demonstrated by the fact that they were represented in leadership positions in all subprojects, maintenance committees and the SACCOs. The impact assessment noted that a number of AAMP-supported groups were dominated by women, some of whom were executive members of their respective group committees.
8. Better rural roads helped reduce the time women spent travelling to carry out domestic chores (e.g. collecting water and firewood, trips to the grinding mill to produce flour for domestic consumption and to local markets, etc.). Improved access to services, such as inputs markets and financial services allowed women to become more involved in economic activities, and the impact on their empowerment was significant.
9. Sensitizing men to gender issues in the household and the community enabled a renegotiation of underlying patriarchal norms. The deliberate engagement and dialogue with men helped to expand spaces for women's participation and partnership.
10. **Sustainability:** There was concern about the viability of the SACCOs supported. The average repayment rate of loans was 75 per cent. Several SACCOs therefore had even lower repayment rates and were thus early candidates for failure.<sup>2</sup> Another challenge was that the SACCOs still lacked sufficient funds to pay for the needed ongoing technical assistance. However, by project completion most SACCOs had been taken up by the IFAD-financed Rural Financial Services Programme to enable them to continue providing services to farmers.
11. **Success factors:** The fact that the implementers were facilitators while the community members were tasked with running the committees fostered a strong sense of ownership and fostered sustainability.
12. The gender sensitization of male heads of households and traditional leaders was largely instrumental in the slight shift in gender roles at the household and community level, respectively. Creating awareness among them helps build a critical mass of male change agents. When men preach gender justice in rural Africa it is usually compelling and creates an enabling environment for gender-related transformative change. The multicomponent approach supported the drive for gender equality. It is much easier for communities to support the drive for social change when they are also benefiting from improved access and opportunities in the local economy.
13. **Agents of change:** The local government authorities were key because their truly "bottom-up" approach to development created a sense of ownership between

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<sup>2</sup> The dangers arising from using SACCOs as conduits of outside funds to farmers. The politicization of microfinance, especially after the 2006 presidential elections, made the overall political environment under which SACCOs operated very challenging.

community members for new activities. Men heads of households and community leaders were vital in the promotion of improved gender equality.

14. **Limitations:** Even though the project exceeded targets on the number of SACCOs created, the number of SACCOs beneficiaries overall (around 29,000 households or less than 10 per cent of families) was relatively low in the programme area. This may be in part because of delays in starting support for SACCOs due to waiting for policy guidance from the central government concerning the Rural Financial Services Strategy (approved in August 2006), specifically regarding the microfinance policy framework.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Mongolia</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Rural Poverty Reduction Programme</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>2002-2011</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Rural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>PPA</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, Mongolia ranked 36 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.714 (ranking 3 in economic participation, 125 in political empowerment, 1 in health and survival and 47 in educational attainment). Incidence of early marriage was low at 4 per cent. The reasons for gender inequality, exclusion and discrimination in the pastoral communities included the low asset base (livestock) of women-headed households and a lack of access to credit and collective decision spaces. A general issue affecting poor households is the long and inhospitable winter that limits fodder available for livestock and the variety in people's diets and requires families to work hard during the brief summer.
2. **Strategy:** The project did not mainstream gender throughout the whole project – long-term goals and overall objectives of the project do not refer to women in general, women's empowerment or gender equality. The project does however include a component on social development, including "women in development", in addition to four other components. Women in development aimed to increase women's access to skills, credit, income and health/literacy and free up women's time through kindergarten services. The loan agreement specified that the government should ensure that 50 per cent of programme managers should be women.
3. Approximately 15 per cent of households in the project area were single women with children. These were identified as very vulnerable because of their inferior social and economic standing, and the project's aim was to include them as a significant part of the target group.
4. **Activity/ies:** Mobile kindergartens were provided, each accommodating approximately 25 children aged 2 to 7 years old, performing activities in readiness for the long winter to free up time for mothers, and to a lesser extent, fathers. The kindergartens were also in response to the pressing (felt) need for early childhood education. The parents set up the ger (tent) and provided food. They picked up their children each day around 19.00.
5. **Outputs:** Since 2004, the IFAD-supported mobile kindergartens have served more than 29,000 children in 79 villages (compared to a target of 73) in four of the country's poorest provinces. Preschool activities increased by 76 per cent (although this value may also include sedentary kindergartens).
6. **Impact:** Mobile kindergartens enabled parents to conduct much needed work in preparation for the harsh winter. Parents had time to milk animals, process dairy products, grow vegetables and earn a bit of income. It is not clear if this led to improved food and nutrition security and increased economic activities performed by women.
7. **Sustainability:** The Government department of health and education and the World Bank are reported to have continued or replicated the mobile kindergarten services.
8. **Success factors:** Directly addressing the serious time constraints of rural women that limited food and nutrition security.



9. **Agents of change:** 50 per cent of programme management personnel were women, in line with the project design. The IFAD Mid-Term Review ensured a greater focus on the subtarget group of poor women-headed households.
10. **Limitations:** Only 3 per cent of the budget was allotted to the subcomponent on Women in Development and of that, 15 per cent was unspent.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Sri Lanka</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Dry Zone Livelihood Support and Partnerships Programme</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>2004-2014</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Agricultural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>Impact evaluation and PCRV</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, Sri Lanka ranked 31 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.7212 (ranking 102 in economic participation, 7 in political empowerment, 1 in health and survival and 103 in educational attainment). The impact evaluation and PCRV do not provide any information on issues regarding gender equality prior to the project.
2. **Strategy:** The project design included a well-defined gender strategy. Women were an integral part of the target group and some activities were to be undertaken nearly exclusively by them. Project activities covered the three main areas of the IFAD Gender Plan of Action.
3. **Activity/ies:** The *Apeksha* and the *Bhagya* micro finance schemes with subsidized interest rates and support to income-generating activities to increase incomes generated by the rural poor, in particular women. Other project activities included marketing and enterprise development, rainfed upland agricultural development, irrigation rehabilitation and community infrastructure development.
4. **Outputs:** The *Bhagya* scheme was implemented with the involvement of state and regional banks and with the supervision and provision of refinance facilities by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. The *Bhagya* scheme provided 4,651 loans to savings and credit groups (60 to 100 per cent of beneficiaries were women) at an interest rate of 10 per cent per annum and displayed an average recovery rate of around 90 per cent. The *Apeksha* scheme was operated by the Women's Bureau and pre-existed the project. Under *Apeksha*, 2,714 loans were issued to savings and credit groups at an annual interest rate of 6 per cent. The demand was so high that by the impact evaluation more than 8,000 women were on the waiting list in Monaragala District alone, where 887 women had been served to-date.
5. A total of US\$2 million was used as credit support by 962 groups for IGA. A study of the programme estimated the average annual incremental income as US\$613 per beneficiary per year.
6. The project contributed to the development of grassroots networks at the village level, particularly through support to savings and credit groups, crop societies, dairy societies and the federations of these societies. In many of these, women held positions of responsibility. For example, women were strongly represented in crop societies, representing 56 per cent of all the members (43 per cent of the presidents; 64 per cent of the secretaries; 54 per cent of the treasurers). A total of 17,102 women and 20,335 men received extension services in major dry land crops.
7. The project also supported the construction of about 740 km of access roads, 120 community buildings and 113 drinking-water supply schemes.
8. **Impact:** The project's performance in gender equality and women's empowerment was assessed as highly satisfactory. Most loan beneficiaries were women (60-100 per cent) and women were strongly represented in terms of number and responsibility in village level groups covering credit, crops and dairy.

9. Although women were the main beneficiaries of *Bhaghya* loans, men (husbands or sons) were often involved in some aspect of the enterprise financed by the loan. This set-up is reported to have strengthened cooperation between men and women in the family. The microfinance schemes, groups and federations brought multiple benefits: improved social cohesion in rural areas; increased confidence of women as entrepreneurs and in their ability to engage with the formal banking sector; and more independence for women in household financial matters.
10. Improvements in the dairy value chain and community infrastructure, such as roads, pre-schools and drinking-water supplies, are reported to have benefited women but it is not explained how and to what extent.
11. Men and women repeatedly stressed that they worked together and equally in household management and income generation. For example, men and women commonly shared tasks including cooking, childcare, washing clothes at home and various aspects of cultivation, marketing (milk) and household micro enterprises. Reports do not explain the extent to which this behaviour differs from before the project.
12. **Sustainability:** The main issues concerning the sustainability of the *Apeksha* and *Bhaghya* schemes were the availability of the revolving funds established and the adequacy of the funds available to meet the demand, respectively. The beneficiaries of both schemes will have had to eventually move on to standard loan schemes available with the banks, and the participating banks should have taken initiatives to attract the beneficiaries to such facilities.
13. Arrangements were made to maintain the renovated roads by linking users to local administrations to facilitate participatory maintenance. However, by the impact evaluation only 16 per cent of the community infrastructure was still operating successfully.
14. **Success factors:** Within the *Bhaghya* loan scheme, the vast majority of groups formed were new, often made up of close friends, with high levels of trust and cooperation. This strengthened bonds between women (the majority of clients) solidarity guarantors of group loans and facilitated women's contact with local banks.
15. **Agents of change:** Village level groups and associations
16. **Limitations:** The enterprise development component was not well linked to the credit schemes of *Bhaghya* and *Apeksha*, limiting potential synergies.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Ecuador</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian Development Project (PRODEPINE)</b>		
<b>Report period</b>	<b>1997-2005</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Rural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>CPE</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, Ecuador ranked 45 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.7035 (ranking 99 in economic participation, 29 in political empowerment, 58 in health and survival and 77 in educational attainment). In Ecuador there are high levels of gender-based violence with 6 out of 10 women having suffered some type of violence. Almost all women (98 per cent) provide the unpaid labour at home and many also in agriculture (48 per cent), limiting their income and influence in decision-making. Women also work much longer hours than men per week. Women, especially of Afro-Ecuadorians and indigenous ethnicity, experience barriers to entry into the labour market and receive lower remuneration than other social groups, even when they have equal levels of education and experience. In recent years many rural men have migrated away from rural areas, leaving women behind to perform more of the productive activities. Indigenous societies are strongly patriarchal and women are largely illiterate. Indigenous women lack access to capital to improve farming, invest in small enterprises and support their family.
2. Since 2008 Ecuador's new legal and constitutional framework includes important advances in gender-related issues but implementation of this in processes on the ground is limited. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries is currently incorporating issues of inclusion and gender equity into the sectoral policy on small-scale agriculture.
3. **Strategy:** The project lacked a robust gender strategy from project design.
4. **Activity/ies:** There has been improved access to rural financial services through "*cajas solidarias*" (savings and credit groups) for indigenous women's groups. The groups were created to access the funds, which provided them with seed capital. The capital was administered by the women themselves and then repaid with interest. Initial training was given.
5. **Outputs:** A total of 150 *cajas solidarias* were planned, while 626 were created and 59 were still operational at project completion. The 59 funds still operational were reportedly highly successful and empowering for the indigenous women involved. The indigenous women's groups became platforms and spaces for women to develop their capacities and obtain access to credit for the first time.
6. **Impacts:** The *cajas solidarias* were an unprecedented development in the country and in highly patriarchal communities, and contributed to the social and economic empowerment of many women, especially indigenous women. They benefited from increased self-esteem and influence over decision-making at home thanks to their own independent source of income. The women also reported being able to help their children finish school and not have to sell small livestock to assist in cases of economic emergencies. At the community level, women have gained respect through their organizations, are consulted for important decisions in the community, and have been asked for advice from neighbouring communities on setting up and managing the *cajas solidarias*. The creation of indigenous women's groups to access the funds was considered a successful breakthrough in the country.

7. **Sustainability:** Many funds stopped working owing to the high levels of illiteracy among indigenous women and a lack of technical support from local and national institutions.
8. **Success factors:** The sustainability of the 59 operational funds was due to several factors, including support from more literate family members such as husbands (and in one association university-educated daughters) with accounting, treasury and presenting reports. The funds were also supported by indigenous organizations, local institutions and the Nations and Peoples of Ecuador Development Council (CODENPE). CODENPE started a registry of the funds, legalized them under a new legal framework and provided them with technical assistance and support, although it is not clear if this continues today.
9. **Agents of change:** Indigenous organizations, local institutions and CODENPE.
10. **Limitations:** The project lacked a robust gender strategy from project design, gender was not sufficiently institutionalized in the project management unit and not enough resources were allocated to gender-related activities. For example, minimal IFAD funds (3 per cent) were allocated to implementing the *cajas solidarias*. There was a high turnover of gender staff in the project management unit so the benefits from awareness raising and training in gender issues and *cajas solidarias* were lost. Without timely follow up and technical support from local and national institutions, many funds stopped working. The project impact on Afro-Ecuadorian women is unclear.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Ghana</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Rural Enterprises Project, phase II (REP II)</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>2002-2014</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Research/extension/training</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>PCRv and CPE</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, Ghana ranked 70 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.6811 (ranking 17 in economic participation, 91 in political empowerment, 104 in health and survival and 111 in educational attainment). Major factors that cause persistent gender inequality in Ghana include: the absence of sufficient social protection mechanisms for women; some customary beliefs; as well as geographic disparities (poverty is more pervasive in the northern part of the country than the south). Restrictions on women's access to, control of and ownership over resources are highlighted regularly in various country reports as a major concern among women in Ghana.
2. **Strategy:** The project's overall goal is to build competitive micro- and small enterprises (MSEs) in rural areas in eight of Ghana's ten regions through the provision of good-quality, easily accessible and sustainable services, as well as appropriate training for poor rural people. The project is also reported to have focused on "increasing the incomes of women and vulnerable groups through increased self- and wage employment in Ghana". An identified subtarget group was "socially disadvantaged women", including women-headed households. Gender analysis was incorporated in the community profiles undertaken during the design of REP II.
3. **Activity/ies:** Rural financial services and the targeting of women-owned MSEs. Other project activities included Technology Promotion and Support to Apprentices Training through the establishment of rural technology facilities in selected districts. Training was provided in business development, rural finance, technology transfer and promotion, partnership-building and policy dialogue, and project management.
4. **Outputs:** Overall, 62 per cent of project beneficiaries were women and 44 per cent were youth (no distinction was made between young men and women). Women comprised 64.7 per cent of training participants under business development services and 51.1 per cent of training in apprentices, but only 9.4 per cent of training participants in master crafts and 8.7 per cent in training of participating financial institutions staff – representing the gender ceiling in professional roles related to the limited educational opportunities for women. It is notable however that women comprised 60.5 per cent of the new business operators, 66.8 per cent of the MSE operators receiving loans, 65.9 per cent of the MSE operators linked to larger commercial enterprises, 59.2 per cent of the clients operating active bank accounts and 61.6 per cent of the people in new paid employment. The new paid employment was created through the establishment of 25,139 new businesses. In terms of access to credit, the proportion of women to men borrowers notably improved from the first phase of the project (REP I), demonstrating that culture and practices in relation to gender are changing.
5. **Impact:** Results from a field survey involving 340 beneficiaries indicate that 92 per cent have higher incomes. They attribute this in part to the expansion of their businesses as well as improved managerial skills and access to other support services received from the project. Average incomes were around GH¢455.00

before enrolling in the REP and GH¢755.00 after participating in the project – an increase of 66 per cent.

6. The project successfully promoted gender equality and women's empowerment in two ways: One, the business support they received helped increase their income, which gave them greater freedom within the household as well as more respect in their household and the community. They used the increased income for household needs, including health, education and food for the family, but also reinvested it in their own businesses and in other income-generating activities for the household, such as farming or apprenticeships for children. Second, women were empowered through improved financial literacy and by forming producer groups, thus finding collective support among themselves and empowering them beyond the group itself. The men confirmed that they were appreciative of the women's stronger role in providing for the household.
7. With improved and more equal access to financial resources many women reported feeling more secure about their families' well-being. The new sense of self-assuredness had created more opportunities for the future. An evaluator concludes that "even a small impact in financial terms can have a substantial impact on women's empowerment".
8. To a minimal degree, men were supported to engage in entrepreneurship roles traditionally considered for women and vice versa. For example, men undertook training in soap making and women in metal work (how this affected the subsequent activities of men and women is not reported).
9. **Sustainability:** The communities themselves helped decide the structure and composition of MSE committees, which helped foster a sense of ownership. The role of these committees was to mainstream MSE development in the local government system, organize rotational trade shows and participate in the development of industrial estates. Another sustainable result was the law and policy reforms that happened at local government level. The latter led to the integration of business advisory centres and rural technology facilities into local government structures. While this would need to be monitored closely for its impact on women, the fact that it targets improved access for microentrepreneurs within the committees creates room for more women to be reached.
10. **Success factors:** Ownership and participation by poor rural people and local institutions, and having innovative practices embedded within local policy frameworks have been key to the sustainability of project results. A stable socio-economic country context, strong participation and involvement by the district assemblies from project design to monitoring and evaluation and the strength and coherence of IFAD's implementing team were also important factors driving impact and sustainability. It is also reported that the existence of strong matriarchal norms and customary beliefs helped bring about changes in gender roles and responsibilities at home and in the community. Another success factor may be the long-term support to enterprise development in Ghana by IFAD from REP I to the currently under implementation REP III (spanning from 1992 to the present day and planned until 2019).
11. **Agents of change:** Local stakeholders including the district assemblies and the MSE subcommittees within the district authorities.
12. **Limitations:** The promotion of women's involvement in decision-making occurred through the Business Advisory Centre staff and MSE Committee training, but the evaluation team reported that the Project Coordination and Monitoring Unit would have benefited from having a gender specialist in its team, rather than only a gender focal point (less specialized).

<b>Country</b>	<b>Senegal</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Agricultural Development Project in Matam – Phase II (PRODAM II)</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>2003-2013</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Rural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>CPE, PCRV and PCR</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, Senegal ranked 92 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.6573 (ranking 47 in economic participation, 58 in political empowerment, 80 in health and survival and 123 in educational attainment). Illiteracy is more common among women (62 per cent) and overall in rural areas (68.2 per cent). The gross enrolment rate at the elementary school level has increasingly risen from 69.4 per cent in 2001 to 82.5 per cent in 2005, with a rate of primary school completion of 44.1 per cent. The presence of women in decision-making positions in producer organizations in Senegal remains low. Gender-based violence is a serious issue in Senegal.
2. **Strategy:** Gender considerations were mainstreamed into project components and operations. Activities that promoted gender equality and women's empowerment included the Regional Gender Observatory, literacy training, rural financial services and vegetable plots managed by women's groups and young people.
3. **Activity/ies:** Gender observatories at regional and subregional levels were created to enable development actors to regularly assess gender issues and exchange relevant information.
4. **Outputs:** The observatories helped address issues of violence against women and promoted respect for women. Women and men community leaders volunteered to act as champions and support women's rights proactively (through community education, especially around International Women's Day and other initiatives). Moreover, they were sought out for support when incidences of violence or discrimination occurred. They also worked hard to ensure that follow up of abused individuals was carried out by the State.
5. **Impact:** The impact of the observatories is not clearly reported (in the CPE, PCRV, PCR).
6. **Sustainability:** The Ministry of Women, Children and Women's entrepreneurship wanted to replicate and scale up the Observatory model to a national level.
7. **Success factors:** Ability to recruit volunteers.
8. **Agents of change** (regarding the strong mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment in the whole country portfolio): The projects in the portfolio benefited from a full-time person working on gender-related issues (as well as monitoring and evaluation and communication). In addition, a regional resource person in IFAD's Country Office provided support and monitoring of gender issues in projects. The regional gender focal point was important for the coherence of the country programme. She participated in supervision missions which helped identify lessons regarding the inclusion of women and young people.
9. **Limitations:** Lack of evidence of impact.



<b>Country</b>	<b>Sudan</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Gash Sustainable Livelihoods Regeneration Project (GSLRP)</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>2003-2013</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Agricultural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>PPA</b>		

1. **Context:** The formal economy of Sudan is composed of a mostly male workforce. The majority of women participate in agricultural activities, and most of them are making "unrecognized" contributions. More than three quarters of Sudan's female labour force is concentrated in agriculture. Of these, the vast majority are involved in subsistence farming and the minority in commercial farming. The majority of labour is performed by women and children. A major root cause of women's exclusion from more productive activities and decision-making was the patriarchal belief system enforced by local men. The Hadendowa tribe in the project area was known to be conservative when it came to women's participation in public issues.<sup>3</sup>
2. **Strategy:** The gender strategy is not clear from reports. It appears that gender was not mainstreamed throughout activities and operations, but targeted efforts were made to address gender issues. The project targeted the poor based on five criteria: food self-sufficiency, livestock wealth, irrigated area under tenancy, reliance on aid for subsistence and gender. The approach to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the project was to improve women's participation in public issues, empower them economically and in some cases reduce their workload through improved access to safe water.
3. **Activity/ies:** The project supported the establishment of community development committees (CDCs) at village level, including women-only groups. It also provided training and the facilitation of savings and lending groups from the CDCs. Complementary activities included training and capacity development on important livelihood activities.
4. **Output:** A total of 69 CDCs were established, including those with only women. Training was delivered to more than 15,000 people, of whom 59 per cent were women, covering various topics such as water management and sanitation, animal healthcare, group formation and management, food processing, business management, handicrafts and home vegetable gardens. The majority (78 per cent) of the 77 women interviewed claimed to have benefited from the skills acquired and the promotion and creation of 95 savings and lending groups (with a total membership of 2,094 people, of whom 96 per cent were women). Through the women's savings and lending groups, women accumulated savings and were able to borrow from the bank for farm and non-farm income-generating activities.
5. **Impact:** Given the conservative nature of the Hadendowa tribe regarding women's participation in public issues, the project interventions had a significant impact. The CDCs provided a platform for women to influence community development priorities and also enabled them to form cooperative groups. The participation of women in the CDCs, either in women-only or mixed committees, became acceptable to 75 per cent of men interviewed compared to 23 per cent before the project. Interviewees considered that women's participation in the project activities in general had led to several benefits, including more hygienic and healthy household environments; improved family diet; improved child health; increased

<sup>3</sup> Global Gender Gap index data for Sudan from 2011 is unavailable.

enrolment and regular attendance of pupils; increased family income and the contribution of women in financing agriculture, children education expenses, and improvement in household furniture and equipment.

6. There was a significant effort made to challenge established gender beliefs and norms especially within the "community development, empowerment and capacity-building" component of the project. As a result of benefits to the community which came from women's participation in project activities. 64 per cent of community members indicated they had become comfortable with women's participation in leadership and decision-making within the community. The women met by the PPA mission reported there had been no problems with their husbands about their participation in training activities.
7. The women trainees confirmed that after training, their husbands and men in general started to appreciate the role of women in community economic and social activities as well as in family life. Some women confirmed that their husbands began to entrust them with management of the household budget. There was also supporting evidence of gender gains in areas like credit access. Women in savings and lending groups almost unanimously indicated that, with multiple loans of progressively increasing amounts supporting growing and diversifying IGAs, they were able to purchase household assets (such as furniture, which is not included in the above list), as well as small ruminants.
8. Long held traditional and religious beliefs about male headship and dominance underscore the project's impressive achievement in terms of being able to influence women's increased voice in the sphere of community leadership and decision-making.
9. **Sustainability:** Two main factors supported sustainability. One was the grounding of gender issues in community structures (committees and groups) which was an attempt to institutionalize project approaches by integrating them into local governance processes. The other factor was the project approach to transfer knowledge and skills rather than implement directly. IFAD in this case played the role of a facilitator whose main task was to equip beneficiaries with the information, structure and tools required to keep doing the work whether or not IFAD's support continued.
10. **Success factors:** There are two main reasons reported behind the success of the CDCs. The first was that women's participation was very clearly linked to the common good. There was broad based buy-in to their participation because it was proven that individual households and also the community in general were better off for it. Secondly, the conversations that were held with local men and leaders – "the gatekeepers of customs" – to discuss whether they were comfortable with women's participation in decision-making showed cultural sensitivity and created space to advocate for women's participation.
11. **Agents of change:** The CDCs and the village development committees. These provided a platform for women to influence community development priorities and also enabled them to form cooperative groups. The male community leaders were also instrumental in GEWE-related change.
12. **Limitations:** Training usually took place in schools after the lessons were finished. This made women's participation difficult owing to their time constraints. Nevertheless, in general, interactions with women's groups in the field conveyed the sense that they were highly satisfied with the skills training and improved – or rather, "newly introduced" – access to microcredit.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Uganda</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Vegetable Oil Development Project (VODP)</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>1997-2013</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Rural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>PCR and PCRv</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, Uganda ranked 29 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.722 (ranking 42 in economic participation, 25 in political empowerment, 1 in health and survival and 107 in educational attainment). Civil strife caused by the Lord's Resistance Army had left many jobless and impoverished veterans. There were also many widows left as heads of households as a result of AIDS.
2. **Strategy:** Gender was mainstreamed in project objectives, components and targets. VODP aimed to increase domestic vegetable oil production, address rural poverty and improve the health of the population. It addressed rural poverty through the involvement of smallholder farmers in oil crop production and cottage processing; and aimed to contribute to improved health and food security through increased vegetable oil intake and the provision of alternative crops for income generation.
3. **Activity/ies:** Facilitate improved production, processing and market access for rural farmers involved in growing traditional oilseeds such as sim sim, sunflower, ground nuts and soya bean. This included support for adaptive research in improved seed varieties, the provision of extension services and the creation and support of farmers' groups by offering institutional capacity-building support. This included the provision of appropriate technologies to optimize oil extraction from crops for farmers, in particular for women. Other components focused on the production, processing and marketing of palm oil and essential oils.
4. **Outputs:** A total of 212,229 smallholders were directly reached by the project, of which 83,007 (39 per cent) were women: (i) 444 (34 per cent) in the palm oil component; (ii) 82,263 (39 per cent) in the traditional oil seeds component; and (iii) 300 (30 per cent) in the essential oil component. In the traditional oil seeds component, the local government staff strengthened the already existing farmers' groups and formed new ones (with at least 20 members). Women and youth were particularly encouraged to form groups. The project trained group members in group dynamics to ensure that farmers appreciated the need to maintain a strong group. Farmers were informed of the benefits of working in groups including learning from each other, ease of mobilization for provision of extension services and bulking, among others. The project also trained farmer groups in marketing and saving and credit activities to earn higher income from their produce and to manage their resources better.
5. **Strategy:** In total 5,998 farmer groups (versus planned 8,770) were formed, 8,453 on-farm demonstrations (versus planned 11,963) were held, 8,755 farmer training sessions (versus planned 12,236) were conducted and 56,289 farm visits (versus planned 71,340) were undertaken. This mobilization attracted more farmers to grow traditional oil crops, especially sunflower, where 68,071 hectares out of the targeted 85,236 (80 per cent) were planted.
6. The provision of ram presses enhanced domestic vegetable oil consumption in addition to enabling farmers to utilize sunflower cakes for other projects such as poultry and piggyery. Some of the oil was sold for income. However, many women

may have missed out on this opportunity owing to difficulty operating the machinery.

7. **Impact:** Farmers' skills and knowledge in oil crop production and management improved (no differentiation between men and women found). Increased incomes were reported by 86 per cent of households in the traditional oil seeds subcomponent. Although income data is not disaggregated by gender, it is reported that women equally participated and benefited from the project. The project led to a change in production from subsistence to commercial farming. Projects like piggery and poultry were set up in the traditional oil seeds subcomponent area because of sunflower production, which had animal feed cake as a by-product. Bee-keeping was also carried out by farmers involved in sunflower production.
8. Farmer groups established in traditional oil seeds and essential oil seeds subcomponents raised the rural poor's voice and respect in society to the extent that some model farmers and group leaders were elected local council leaders. Women and youth were equally involved as group leaders and in several farmers' groups women are reported to have excelled.
9. **Sustainability:** Many beneficiary farmers moved from subsistence to more business-oriented ventures within the oil value chains (gender-disaggregated impact data not available). Nonetheless, much of their activities still required support and external funding.
10. **Success factors:** The mobilization of women to form/join farmers' groups by the local government authorities.
11. **Agents of change:** The project worked closely with the local leaders at all levels. These included opinion leaders, political leaders, religious leaders and elders in the communities. Female leaders were specifically targeted as these were found to appeal more to women, youth and the elderly. These leaders participated in project activities, mobilized the farmers and worked with the project to counter negative publicity. The strategy generated and enhanced political support, ownership and sustainability from the national, district and grass-root levels.
12. **Limitations:** Sunflower faced some resistance initially, as some farmers had erroneously associated it with soil infertility while others related it to poor market prices. With sensitization, training, demonstrations and assured markets from millers, farmers' attitudes changed and sunflower became one of the most produced commodities in the project area. The manual ram press technology to process sunflower seeds presented a challenge because it required too much strength for women and the elderly to operate. The targets of planned activities in some cases were not fully met due to drought, floods and the effects of the Lord's Resistance Army war that affected project activities.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Yemen</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>38/39</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>1. Al Mahara Rural Development Project (AMRDP)</b> <b>2. Dhamar Participatory Rural Development Project (DPRDP)</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>1. 1999-2012</b> <b>2. 2002-2013</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Agricultural development and rural development (resp.)</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>PCRv and CPE</b>		

- Project and country:** Al Mahara Rural Development Project (AMRDP) and Dhamar Participatory Rural Development Project (DPRDP), Yemen.
- Project types:** Agricultural development and rural development (respectively).
- Context:** In 2011, Yemen ranked last out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.4873 (ranking 135 in economic participation, 131 in political empowerment, 83 in health and survival and 134 in educational attainment). Women are among the poorest in Yemen and female-headed households are poorer than male-headed households, especially in rural areas. Women have limited access and control of productive assets, restricted contribution to civic and social activities and high levels of illiteracy. Less than 1 per cent of agricultural landholders in Yemen are women. However, women have a major role in agriculture, often bearing the main responsibility for field crops, irrigated fodder, and horticulture. Women are also the main handlers of livestock within the home compound, and in the highlands they are mainly responsible for the care of cattle. Women officially constitute 39 per cent of household labour on farms and 10 per cent of wage labour, but their share of both may be higher.
- Migration of the young and male household members away from rural areas means the women left behind must bear greater responsibility for managing the farm and caring for the family, on top of their existing tasks. While remittances sent home can enable some women to improve household living conditions and purchase food and non-food items, there has also been a shift from producing their own food to purchasing food. Women are also subject to pressure from young men and local community members from associations, or individuals with material or religious influence to restrict women's economic activities and promote the woman's place at home.
- Strategy:** Gender issues have been mainstreamed through much of the projects' components that aimed to strengthen the capacity of men and women farmers and fishermen and their communities, particularly disadvantaged groups, to determine access to and use of appropriate resources, technology and financial services for domestic work, agriculture, fisheries and livestock development. Gender balance was sought among project and field staff for several reasons: the need to respect cultural sensitivities in isolated rural communities; to communicate effectively with poor rural women; and to ensure their effective participation in project activities.
- Activity/ies:** The AMRDP initiated and the DPRDP developed women-only and men-only community development committees (CDCs) to identify priority needs and address them accordingly through small-scale initiatives. Women-only CDCs aimed to raise awareness about and address women's needs by creating a safe space for them to discuss and identify their needs. The initiatives envisaged included road construction, village water supply schemes, soil and water

conservation works, minor irrigation and other investments that arose from popular demand.

7. **Outputs:** In AMRDP, 304 women and 421 men were trained in community development and 38 women-only (and 39 men-only) CDCs were created in 42 communities. The women-only CDCs were later converted and registered as Women's Development Associations, under the Civil Society Association Law. In DPRDP, 624 women and 1,677 men were trained in community development and 136 CDCs were created (but it was not reported in the PCRV how many of them were women-only). The CDCs enabled men and women to identify and prioritize their needs and effectively assess their development issues. It also allowed communities to actively contribute to the preparation and implementation of initiatives. Village development plans were formulated from discussions held in CDCs and were incorporated into local government planning and budgeting processes. Completed investments identified in these plans have been handed over to relevant governorate agencies for operation and maintenance or are being managed and operated by local committees on the basis of full cost recovery.
8. **Impact:** The women-only CDCs encouraged the strong and effective involvement of women in community affairs (rather than only traditional male-dominated leadership) and they are reported to have given women confidence in their ability to initiate and manage development initiatives. The CDCs are used as lobbying platforms for communities to secure services from the government or NGOs (it is not known if this applies to both women and men CDCs). The creation, strengthening and registration of representative community organizations is a hallmark of IFAD operations in the country.
9. **Sustainability:** The CDCs were a relatively new method in rural Yemen to encourage local communities to establish and maintain sustainable projects to meet their own (and differential) needs. Yet, the conversion of the CDCs into associations (notably in AMRDP and DPRDP) has produced a qualitative leap in the lives of the members. Aided by the project, these associations have been registered with the offices of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, giving them some access to support from the Ministry. It also allows them – as entities legally recognized by the state – to contact others, specifically donors. Even though still limited overall, the registration of CDCs by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour so far is considered a major achievement because it enables the associations to operate within the law and become financially sustainable.
10. **Success factors:** A supportive government service and policy; cultural sensitivity when dealing with traditional community leaders; a great deal of time and the earmarking of resources needed to overcome the many problems encountered; field teams of men and women to ensure gender issues were mainstreamed in the conservative male-run society of Yemen.
11. **Agents of change:** The CDCs can be said to be the principal change agents promoting gender equality in this project.
12. **Limitations:** Social and economic instability and conflicting ideologies in the country.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Yemen</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Dhamar Participatory Rural Development Project (DPRDP)</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>2002-2013</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Rural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>PCR V</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, Yemen ranked last out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.4873 (ranking 135 in economic participation, 131 in political empowerment, 83 in health and survival and 134 in educational attainment). Women are among the poorest in Yemen and female-headed households are poorer than male-headed households, especially in rural areas. Women have limited access and control of productive assets, restricted contribution to civic and social activities and high levels of illiteracy. Less than 1 per cent of agricultural landholders in Yemen are women. However, women have a major role in agriculture, often bearing the main responsibility for field crops, irrigated fodder and horticulture. Women are also the main handlers of livestock within the home compound. In the highlands, women are mainly responsible for the care of cattle. Women officially constitute 39 per cent of household labour on farms and 10 per cent of wage labour, but their share of both may be higher.
2. Migration of the young and male household members away from rural areas means the women left behind must bear greater responsibility for managing the farm and caring for the family, in addition to their existing tasks. While remittances sent home can enable some women to improve household living conditions and purchase food and non-food items, there has also been a shift from producing their own food to purchasing food. Women are also subject to local pressure on young men and local community members from associations or individuals with material or religious influence to restrict women's economic activities and promote the woman's place at home. Animal extension services to improve livestock husbandry were unavailable before the project.
3. **Strategy:** Gender issues have been mainstreamed through much of the projects' components that aimed to empower communities to enable them to participate and benefit from project execution, remove social and physical constraints to productivity and empower farming households to achieve food security and increase income from market sales. A gender balance was sought among project and field staff for several reasons: the need to respect cultural sensitivities in isolated rural communities; to communicate effectively with poor rural women; and to ensure their effective participation in project activities. Although the project was approved after the Gender Plan of Action, it addressed the three main objectives.
4. **Activity/ies:** Identification and training of men and women to become village animal health extension workers (VAHEWs). They were trained to provide routine on-farm crop and livestock services and demonstrations based on farmer demand. The project provided incentives to the best-performing VAHEWs. These took the form of grants, equipment or tools (veterinary kits) to enable them to commercialize their work in the future and continue providing extension services.
5. Other interventions that targeted gender issues were the construction of social infrastructure (schools, water supplies and healthcare centres) and feeder roads, literacy training, participatory and women-only community development committees and savings and credit groups.

6. **Outputs:** A total of 244 men and 94 women extension agents were identified in the communities and trained, and of these agents, 21 men and 74 women received veterinary kits. The activity worked better for women than men (35 per cent of target) because animal rearing was mainly a women's responsibility.
7. **Impact:** Overall, the project had a significant positive impact on women in its attempt to reduce gender inequalities. Reports on the impact of VAHEWs were not found. Interviews with beneficiaries suggested that the project was successful in overcoming many social constraints of vulnerable groups and women. In particular, women received training to perform various roles at the community level, increasing their visibility and voice to influence decision-making.
8. A water harvesting project in Utmah governorate provided clean, filtered water at a rate of 10 litres per person per day for a three-month period. This reduced the time spent fetching water by two hours per day for women and girls over this time period.
9. **Sustainability:** All selected extension workers were trained in their relevant fields and started to deliver their extension advice/messages on a fee-for-service-basis, in an attempt to commercialize the extension services in the target communities. The model was successful in some communities, but more time was needed for it to gain widespread community acceptance and to be replicated on a wider scale. In some communities, incentivizing the VAHEWS through veterinary kits was not effective and called into question the sustainability of the extension services.
10. **Success factors:** Positive discrimination towards women in activities and operations in a context of extreme gender inequality. An equal number of men and women field staff promoted the inclusion of women in project activities and planning processes.
11. **Agents of change:** Female farmers trained to be agricultural extension agents to overcome the problem of reaching out to women and breaking down communication barriers.
12. **Limitations:** There was limited success involving men in VAHEW. A more effective use of resources would have been to focus the identification and training on women, rather than men, given that women are responsible for livestock around the home. Men did not benefit as planned from the literacy training. Possible reasons for this included that men saw little financial gain so did not invest their time in literacy classes, the project mainly targeted women and may not have targeted men effectively, the service provider who conducted the training may not have effectively reached out to men. Civil unrest in 2011 slowed down disbursements and made parts of the project area inaccessible. The water from the open water harvesting tanks was highly vulnerable to contamination and therefore unsafe for consumption. The availability of clean drinking water in Utmah governorate still saw a large number of girls collecting water rather than attending school. When enquiring about the reason for their absence from school, an elderly woman responded, "Why education? Who will bring the water? Who will take care of the sheep?". This highlights the remaining practical, cultural and inter-generational barriers to gender equality in rural Yemen.



<b>Country</b>	<b>Zambia</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Smallholder Enterprise and Marketing Programme</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>1999-2010</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Agricultural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>CPE</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, Zambia ranked 106 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.63 (ranking 87 in economic participation, 84 in political empowerment, 97 in health and survival and 120 in educational attainment). Despite comprehensive gender mainstreaming in national plans and policies for economic development in general, gender inequality remains deeply entrenched in Zambia. Female participation in the labour market is 74 per cent compared to 86 per cent for men. Women still have difficulty owning and controlling land. Despite formalized equal rights, they are confronted with a number of inequalities. For women in rural areas, this includes access to education, credit and suitable technologies. Women have less access to governmental extension services and training held by private companies – they are often unable to attend farmer education and training days due to too much work at home or because their level of education precludes them from attending the courses. Rural women have a heavier workload than men taking on productive and domestic work, although evidence suggests that men and women are increasingly working together on some productive activities.
2. **Strategy:** Gender was mainstreamed through the project components: (i) agribusiness development; (ii) market access improvement; and (iii) smallholder enterprise development.
3. **Activity/ies:** Infrastructure development to improve women's access to markets.
4. **Outputs:** Overnight accommodation (containers) at the Lusaka Small Livestock Association market with support from the Cross Border Trading Association (CBTA) at Kasumbalesa at the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At the time of the CPE mission, membership of the CBTA comprised 864 people, of whom over 500 were women. The CBTA gradually increased its range of services and aimed to find additional financing for more containers to provide members with a safe storage facility. The containers were used against a small fee.
5. **Impact:** The accommodation provided by the CBTA improved women's access to the important Lusaka Small Livestock Association market by providing them with a safe place to sleep. The CBTA also assists women when they are in trouble (e.g. theft or rape). There are also examples of the association helping members who had been robbed and lost their papers and money in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and were unable to return to Zambia.
6. **Sustainability:** Limited information available.
7. **Success factors:** A safe place for traders, in particular women, to sleep. In addition, the association advocated simplified trade regimes, cheap trade visas and other private sector deals.
8. **Agents of change:** The association is run by volunteers.
9. **Limitations:** Limited information available.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Bangladesh</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Market Infrastructure Development Project in Charland Regions (MIDPCR)</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>2005-2014</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Rural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>PCRVR</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, Bangladesh ranked 69 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.6812 (ranking 118 in economic participation, 11 in political empowerment, 123 in health and survival and 108 in educational attainment). The project area comprises the very poor and inequalities in this area are higher than in most parts of Bangladesh. Literacy levels are low (in particular those of women), family size is large and male migration is high – leaving women to manage farms. Women-headed households and women labourers are among the poorest and most vulnerable in the char lands with low participation in construction, off-farm employment, market trading and market committees. Gender-based violence and women's heavy workloads are also causes of gender inequality and poverty. Markets were generally considered places “frequented by men” making women feel uncomfortable to go there to buy and sell produce. No or limited water and sanitation facilities for women in the market represented another deterrent.
2. **Gender strategy:** The National Women's Development Policy (2011) of the Government of Bangladesh emphasizes the importance of women's access to markets and employment. The project design mainstreamed gender considerations into the two principle components of infrastructure development and production and market group development. The gender strategy aimed to increase women's participation in construction and labour contracting societies, create specific facilities in markets for women, enhance the incomes of women through employment/income generation, enhance livestock-based assets of women and improve the mobility of women with better roads.
3. **Activity/ies:** Improve women's access to and participation in markets by ensuring 25 per cent of the market is reserved for women traders and this area includes newly constructed shops for women (where the lease does not have to be paid for three years). In addition and in line with new government rules, the project aimed to create dedicated women's market sections and enforce women participation quotas in the market management committees (MMCs). Clean water and sanitation facilities were also provided for women in the markets.
4. **Outputs:** Spaces were reserved in every market for women traders and 14 women's market sections were built, increasing the number of women trading in the 66 markets from 48 to 197.
5. **Impact:** Safe spaces in the markets for women and their representation in MMCs enabled more women to trade in market areas and encouraged more women buyers to visit these markets. Women report feeling safe going to the market because the markets are cleaner, better organized and better connected to surrounding villages (after road construction). The volume of trade in markets and trader income are reported to have increased (although data are not disaggregated between men and women). The increased income has been used to improve housing, purchase assets and improve food security.
6. Overall, the increased income and improved job opportunities from all project market development interventions have changed women's status. Decisions in the

households, for instance on purchasing food or cleaning products, are now made jointly. In some communities, women participate more than before in community meetings and decision-making.

7. **Sustainability:** Prospects for sustainability are good based on how well the activities have been received and the positive impacts achieved. Project activities and approaches also enforce new government rules. There is limited information to analyse the cultural, physical and operational sustainability of the market developments.
8. **Success factors:** A good situational analysis and effective targeting of women-headed households and women labourers have meant that this poor social group have benefited from the project
9. **Agents of change:** The women themselves. The Local Government Engineering Department had a strong gender action plan that contributed to the GEWE process.
10. **Limitations:** The number of women's market sections in the markets was limited to 14. Owing to their success, women would like many more to be built. With improved mobility and economic opportunities women have reported an increase in their workload. Women would benefit from less time spent performing unproductive tasks and a more equitable workload between men and women.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Brazil</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Rural Communities Development Project in the Poorest Areas of the State of Bahia</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>2006-2014</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Rural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>PPA</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, Brazil ranked 82 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.6679 (ranking 68 in economic participation, 114 in political empowerment, 1 in health and survival and 66 in educational attainment). In the programme area women suffered from heavy workloads which limited their productivity and income-generating activities, which subsequently limited household food and nutrition security.
2. **Strategy:** The project gender strategy aimed to improve household food security, reduce poverty and improve gender equality through the active participation of women in economic organizations and reducing gender inequalities in rural communities. Gender was mainstreamed throughout all project components to ensure equal participation of men and women in all project activities. The gender strategy addressed the issues of exclusion (equitable access), discrimination (supporting full participation of rural women in economic organizations) and unequal power relations (reducing the training gap between rural men and women; full participation of rural women in economic organizations). The project initially planned that women would count for 30 per cent of the beneficiaries; this was later raised to 50 per cent.
3. **Activity/ies:** Backyard gardens for women to manage and produce vegetables, fruit and herbs for consumption and sale at the market. IFAD provided aid through material support and technical assistance. Water tanks were also provided alongside the backyard gardens to irrigate the land in the semi-arid region throughout the year. In addition to the backyard gardens and water tanks, labour-saving technologies such as fuel-efficient stoves and processing machines were important elements of the gender strategy to free up women's time.
4. **Outputs:** A total of 4,893 backyard gardens were built and 6,245 water tanks of 5 m<sup>3</sup> were constructed.
5. **Impact:** The backyard gardens had multiple positive impacts at the household level – increased income, improved food and nutrition security and the economic empowerment of women. Beneficiaries valued highly the backyard garden activities and reported them as one of the main reasons for improved productive activities in the community.
6. The food produced in the backyard gardens was consumed by the household and sold at the market. This both increased and diversified household income and enabled women to buy essential household items and protein-rich food, such as meat, chicken and eggs. The additional net annual income generated from backyard gardens ranged from approximately US\$490 to US\$981. Although this is not high in absolute terms, it eased household budget constraints to make essential purchases. Household nutrition improved through eating more protein-rich food as well as more diverse fruit and vegetables (lettuce, beetroot, cabbage, onion, oranges, lemons and mangoes) grown in the backyard gardens and tree nurseries. Food security improved thanks to the increased availability of food from the backyard gardens and the additional food purchased. Irrigation water from the water tanks also supported the year-round production of vegetables to improve the stability of the improved food and nutrition security.

7. The backyard gardens meant that for the first time women had access to and control over a part of the household income. Women reported how this helped to challenge gender stereotypes and show that they too can manage economic activities and not merely be the recipients of social investments.
8. Project interventions to free up women's time from burdensome domestic chores potentially enabled women to invest time and energy in training, building and cultivating the productive backyards.
9. **Sustainability:** Owing to the small-scale and relative ease of management of the backyard gardens they have favourable cost-benefit ratios and are likely to remain economically viable in the long-term. They nevertheless still require financial and technical support to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability.
10. **Success factors:** Improving access to water was essential for the success of the backyard gardens and other gender-related activities. Water was identified as the first priority for the majority of councils and investing in water tanks by the project was an approach to build trust with the communities and involve them in other activities. Participatory processes were other key success factors helping to identify women's needs and then adapt investments accordingly. Training also proved vital to improve women's productive activities and political empowerment. Nurseries were set up to produce seedlings for use in the backyard gardens. Multiple complementary investments in backyard gardens, water provision, small livestock, training and participatory community development processes to reduce poverty and improve gender equality created synergy where the whole (overall positive impact) was greater than the sum of its parts (outcomes from individual activities).
11. **Agents of change:** The Project Coordination Unit included a gender expert to oversee gender mainstreaming, although there are no reports of how this contributed to gender-related activities. The mid-term review of IFAD reinforced the emphasis on gender equality in the project.
12. **Limitations:** The backyard gardens address the symptoms of women's limited ability to produce and purchase sufficient and diverse foods, but not the cause of deeper discriminatory norms and processes, such as poor access to farm land. In a minority of the backyard gardens, the quality of works had been poor, reportedly due to a lack of sufficient time to implement these activities. For instance, a soil study before building the water tanks could have prevented cracks in the tanks in some areas and demonstrations and training on how to best use the irrigation system for water efficiency could have maximized its benefits. There was a budget line allocated for gender-related investment activities, but although some of it was used to recruit a gender expert, the rest was reallocated to other investment lines of the project.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Burkina Faso</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Sustainable Rural Development Programme (PDRD)</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>2004-2014</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Agricultural development</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>PCRv</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, Burkina Faso ranked 115 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.6153 (ranking 76 in economic participation, 77 in political empowerment, 98 in health and survival and 129 in educational attainment). The project area was characterized by a sharp rise in poverty indicators and a deterioration in food security indicators, as well as poor access to basic social and financial services. They were also exposed to the great threat of desertification. The factors which sustain and reinforce gender inequality in Burkina Faso are several, including in particular the failure to implement gender responsive laws and the predominance of discriminatory gender customs. Poor rural women lacked access to knowledge and skills.
2. **Strategy:** The target group was composed of some 440,000 people living in 374 villages. They were small-scale farmers, landless migrants, women and youth with rudimentary living conditions. A gender strategy was prepared and included targeting communities where vulnerable women were in the majority.
3. **Activity/ies:** Financial literacy in combination with training on business management and credit and income-generating activities. Other project activities that targeted women were vegetable gardens, water infrastructure and gender sensitization in the community.
4. **Outputs:** The project reached 416,000 people (including farmers, public service staff and project staff), out of which 67 per cent were women and 85 per cent were youth (disaggregation between young men and women not available). Training and sensitization on gender issues was undertaken in collaboration with the regional offices for the promotion of women (*Directions Régionales de la Promotion de la Femme*). Women were the main beneficiaries of vegetable gardens (53 per cent) and 10,000 women and young people (70 per cent women) received training in subjects such as business management, credit and IGAs.
5. A total of 9,017 farmers (84 per cent women) participated in functional literacy training (compared to a quota of 60 per cent). In 2013, 27 per cent of women respondents and 4 per cent of men respondents declared themselves literate compared to 15 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively, in 2007. By project completion, 182 boreholes had been built, and around 624 hectares of land were developed for vegetable gardens, benefiting 26,573 individuals, of whom more than half were women.
6. **Impact:** The lives of women and their families changed thanks to improved financial literacy and expanded livelihood options. For example, women produced vegetables in the gardens (around the water points) that were supported by the project contributing to a more diverse diet in households. Furthermore, women's contribution to the household economy became more visible and helped them improve their image and position. The project's impact on women's access to and control of income (from income-generating activities) is not clear.
7. **Sustainability:** Adopting an approach which positioned IFAD as a facilitator and the rural people themselves as actual 'doers' is said to have catalyzed change and supported sustainable interventions.

8. **Success factors:** The participatory self-evaluation approach which the project established at community level, was reported as a success. Monitoring and evaluation support was provided to 63 villages and they were then organized to carry out self-evaluations, using a tool called the Tree of Truth (l'arbre de la vérité). In addition, a total of 1,198 focal points were trained (two women and one man per village) to facilitate/moderate discussions on topics of public interest, leading to 752 sessions and involving close to 78,000 people. The approach was successful because it transferred knowledge and skills to beneficiaries directly, leaving them with the capacity to track, and also own the project.
9. The project provided gender sensitization training for men and women in the communities, raising a critical mass of men and women gender "change champions". After the training, they had the information and skills to promote gender equality and women's empowerment at the community level. This was undertaken in partnership with the regional offices.
10. **Agents of change:** Regional offices to Promote Women (*Directions Régionales de la Promotion de la Femme*).
11. **Limitations:** In spite of literacy training and broad sensitization to gender equality within the communities, women's representation in local rural institutions was still weak by project completion. This may limit their ability to voice their needs and priorities in the community and influence decision-making.

<b>Country</b>	<b>India</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Livelihoods Improvement Project in the Himalayas</b>		
<b>Implementation period</b>	<b>2003-2013</b>		
<b>Project type</b>	<b>Credit and financial services</b>		
<b>Main documents</b>	<b>PPA</b>		

1. **Context:** In 2011, India ranked 113 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap index with a score of 0.619 (ranking 131 in economic participation, 19 in political empowerment, 134 in health and survival and 121 in educational attainment). Gender relations were different in the two states where the project was operational. Meghalaya was dominated by a matrilineal tribe, with problems of illiteracy, broken marriages, divorce, unwed mothers, early marriage and male drunkenness. In Uttar Pradesh, the poorest were the Scheduled Castes and women among them. Gender relations were more hierarchical and the division of labour more marked (not specified). In both states, many rural women spent much of their day on laborious domestic and productive work. They used agricultural tools that were not appropriate for their height.
2. **Strategy:** The project first aimed to reduce women's workload and then support their economic empowerment and their influence in decision-making. Marginalized women and women-headed households in Uttarakhand and Meghalaya were important target groups. While the goals, objectives and components of the project did not explicitly refer to gender equality and women's empowerment, the interventions were in keeping with IFAD's policy on this subject. The project activities were also largely in keeping with the Draft National Policy of Women, 2016, of the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
3. **Activity/ies:** Labour-saving technologies were introduced to reduce the burden of unpaid, time consuming and inefficient domestic and productive work. In Meghalaya the focus was mainly on improving existing water sources and on increasing the availability of rice mills to reduce the time and effort required to fetch water and shell rice. In Uttarakhand, a broader range of drudgery-reduction activities were employed to free up women's time. Examples of these activities included lightweight pitchers for drinking-water collection, fodder production, improved fire wood sources and a range of improved agricultural and post-harvest implements, including threshers, power tillers and chaff cutters. Complementary activities involved the sensitization of men to gender issues, the formation of women into self-help groups (SHGs) and forming them into federation/clusters, strengthening women's literacy and access to financial services, capacity-building for enterprises/market linkages and the promotion of value chains.
4. **Output:** Drudgery-reduction interventions reduced the time women spent on household chores by five hours a day, for example through motorized wheat threshers (reducing threshing time by 96 per cent) and Napier grass production (reducing women's time spent collecting fodder by 60 per cent). The effectiveness of the lightweight water pitcher vastly exceeded original expectations: the project 'demonstrated' this technology to over 1,900 households and it was eventually adopted by over 12,000 households. A number of SHGs and federations began selling the pitchers in surrounding areas as a commercial venture.
5. **Impact:** The reduction of women's workload freed up women's time which allowed them to engage in income-generating activities, decision-making platforms and literacy classes. In Uttarakhand, 93 per cent of women reported that their say in managing household income had increased. The increased income in the hands of



women is reported to have led to better health and education for children and improved food security for the household. In Uttarakhand, some SHGs have turned the new technologies into a business opportunity, benefiting other women as well – for example the water pitchers not only reduced the time and energy spent on carrying water but were also promoted and sold by SHGs to other women in the area.

6. Improved access to water and sanitation is reported to have improved the health of women, girls and family members. At project completion, 58 per cent of households had their own toilet, an improvement of 20 per cent over control households.
7. The reduction of women's heavy domestic and productive workload is reported to have greatly contributed to the overall impact of the project in the two states. In Uttar Pradesh, only 1-2 per cent of households reported food shortages, compared to 18 per cent before the project. In Meghalaya, the comparative figures were 5 per cent, down from 44 per cent. In Meghalaya, undernourishment figures improved from 36 per cent at the start of the project to 20 per cent for boys, and from 31 per cent to 19 per cent for girls. Women report that they have more of a say in intra-household, village and apex body decision-making. Seventy-two per cent of women reported that their role in household decision-making had increased significantly compared to eight years ago. Men's acceptance of women's changing roles is possibly an indicator of transformation. Women reported that their sense of self-worth had increased.
8. **Sustainability:** Providing repairs and maintenance can be done locally, it was assessed that the labour-saving technologies and their enabling effect on women's empowerment were likely to be sustained.
9. **Success factors:** The strategy to first reduce drudgery for rural women, freeing up time and energy for subsequent activities to economically empower women at home and collectively. Investment in gender sensitization of men. The mainstreaming of gender issues into economic development. The use of NGOs and strengthening their capacity including on gender. Gender training for all agencies involved in the implementation of the project.
10. **Agents of change:** Self-help groups helped to capitalize on the time saved by women.
11. **Limitations:** It is not clear if the project successfully targeted women-headed households in both states and unwed mothers in Meghalaya and Schedule Caste women in Uttarakhand, all previously identified as important subtarget groups. Overall, the targeting strategy was reported as weak in Uttarakhand where the government's poverty list was adopted. The issue of violence against women and male alcoholism does not appear to have been addressed.
12. Many demonstrations of new or improved technologies were judged as unsuccessful owing to low rates of adoption. The main causes were high start-up costs coupled with insufficient return on investment. Technologies demonstrated by the project either cost too much to establish (cattle troughs or large water harvesting tanks for example) or people had no way of repaying the original investment. A lack of technical support to back up some of the demonstrations was also suggested as a contributing factor to the limited success of some technologies.

## IOE/PTA joint theory of change workshop

### Assumptions and risks in typical theories of change for IFAD thematic areas

Intervention theme	Key assumptions – conditions necessary and/or assumed for a step within the theory of change to occur	Gaps – breaks in the causal relationships that limit the achievement of transformational GEWE objectives
<b>Natural resource management, including land and water resources</b>	<p>Legislation ensures women's participation</p> <p>Gender analysis takes into consideration decision-making and social context</p> <p>Social perceptions on gender change as community institutions are strengthened</p> <p>Land use certificates include targeted measures for women</p> <p>Products derived from land use take into account gendered dimensions of production and that women have access to markets and technology</p> <p>Women's participation in decision-making includes household members sharing income and workloads</p> <p>Diversification of income sources includes public recognition of women, family well-being improves, and reduced workloads</p>	<p>Gender analysis should lead to the development of interventions centred on gender empowerment at household, group and community levels. Nonetheless it is unclear what type of interventions are needed to reinforce women's participation in decision-making</p> <p>There is no input identified that would lead to awareness raising of natural resource conservation for villagers</p> <p>Nutrition dimensions are not found in any of the links</p>
<b>Agricultural and livestock production and technologies</b>	<p>Men, especially community leaders, have to be engaged in the validation of gender targeting strategies</p>	<p>Household methodologies are not applied in women's literacy and management training</p> <p>Identification of women leaders and champions and the participation of women in community planning</p> <p>Child care support for women during training</p> <p>Leverage health posts for women in maternal health and nutrition as a result of training</p> <p>Decreased mortality of livestock should also see increased productivity</p> <p>Increased cattle fertility should also include increased milk production and more assets</p> <p>Multiple gaps at impact level include: increased self-confidence of women; women's power strengthened; better income; better health, food security and nutrition; reduced gender-based violence; better work distribution; improved household dynamics</p>
<b>Access to markets, value chain development and enterprise development</b>	<p>Assumptions under backyard activities include: quality of training and material infrastructure is adequate; youth assumed to participate; home gardens would increase food security</p> <p>Women's tasks (i.e. watering) depends on context</p> <p>Income increase impacts need to be broken down: what is being sold, through what mechanism, and with what logic</p>	

	<p>Income increases would be used to buy more protein-rich foods,</p> <p>Access to market activities guaranteed</p> <p>Outcome assumptions include: women have control over incomes; increased access to independent source of income leads to women's empowerment; extra income used to purchase household assets</p>	
<b>Rural financial services</b>		<p>Gaps at the input level include: Gendered demand analysis; financial service providers look at gender issues and engage in gender training; and linking women's groups to financial institutions</p> <p>Gaps at the outcome level include: Low financial performance can impact sustainability</p>
<b>Producer organizations and rural institutions</b>	<p>Pre-assumptions include: households will be reached by trickle-down effect; clear understanding of what gender transformation means; men are interested</p> <p>Men are sensitized as women-only CDCs are set up</p> <p>CDC plans assume high effectiveness of participatory planning, that these will be funded, and that there will be availability of contractors and service providers</p> <p>CDC registration would assume functioning policy framework</p>	<p>Pre-assumption gaps include: household methodologies to engage men; no information on weaknesses and strengths of prior projects; no baseline or initial conditions</p> <p>Beneficiary identification and prioritization of needs require complementary activities, not just training</p> <p>Prioritization processes (taking into account costs and input availability) are unclear</p> <p>Conflict management not included in CDC plan implementation</p> <p>CDC as lobby platforms need to have a measure of their impact</p>

## **Key people met**

### ***(in alphabetical order)***

Ibrahima Bamba, Country Programme Manager, East and Southern Africa Division

Clare Bishop-Sambrook, Lead Technical Specialist, Gender and Social Inclusion, PTA

Adolfo Brizzi, Director, PTA

Marco Camagni, Senior Technical Specialist, Rural Markets and Enterprises, PTA

Wafaa El Khoury, Lead Technical Specialist, Agronomy, PTA

Ilaría Firmian, Environment and Climate Knowledge Officer, Environment and Climate Division

Henrik Franklin, Portfolio Advisor, East and Southern Africa Division

Helen Gilman, Senior Knowledge Management Specialist, Global Engagement, Knowledge and Strategy Division

Michael Hamp, Lead Technical Specialist, Inclusive Rural Financial Services, PTA

Maria Hartl, Senior Technical Specialist, Gender and Social Inclusion, PTA

Ed Heinemann, Lead Technical Specialist, Policy, PTA

Enrique Hennings, Lead Technical Specialist, Rural Markets and Enterprises, PTA

Sara Kouakou, Results Specialist, Programme Management Department

Harold Liversage, Lead Technical Specialist, Land Tenure, PTA

Laure Martin, Programme Officer, Latin America and the Caribbean Division

Cheryl Morden, Secretary of IFAD a.i., Office of the Secretary

Sheila Mwanundu, Lead Technical Specialist, Environment and Climate Division

Torben Nilsson, Senior Global Engagement Specialist, Strategy and Knowledge Department

Marian Odenigbo, Senior Advisor on Nutrition, East and Southern Africa Division

Mattia Prayer Galletti, Lead Technical Specialist, Rural Development and Institutions, PTA

Anja Rabazanahary, Junior Professional Officer, Gender and Social Inclusion, PTA

Antonio Rota, Lead Technical Specialist, Livestock, PTA

Sylvia Schollbrock, Portfolio Advisor, Near East, North Africa and Europe division

Silvia Sperandini, K&M and Communications Focal Point, Gender Team, PTA

Aissa Toure, Programme Officer, Asia and the Pacific Division

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Independent Office of Evaluation  
International Fund for Agricultural Development  
Via Paolo di Dono, 44 - 00142 Rome, Italy  
Tel: +39 06 54591 - Fax: +39 06 5043463  
E-mail: [evaluation@ifad.org](mailto:evaluation@ifad.org)  
[www.ifad.org/evaluation](http://www.ifad.org/evaluation)



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