

**CHALLENGING CHAINS  
TO CHANGE**



# CHALLENGING CHAINS TO CHANGE

GENDER EQUITY IN  
AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAIN  
DEVELOPMENT



Royal Tropical Institute

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MAINSTREAMING  
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Spearheaded by  
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# Foreword

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This book follows a long tradition of gender and development scholarship and activism by highlighting the importance of women's roles in agricultural production and economic development. Written by practitioners, it brings together NGO experiences of working on value chains and using a gender lens in doing so. The book also follows a longstanding tradition of arguing for gender equality as being an intrinsic good and as well an instrumental one. In other words, gender equality is a human right, since everybody has the right to be treated equally. That which makes it a good in itself. In addition, gender equality is also good for business, because it reduces inefficiencies that constrain economic performance, and helps reduce poverty.

The case for recognizing and addressing gender inequalities in agricultural production and economic development has been made consistently since the economist Ester Boserup wrote "*Woman's role in economic development*" in 1970. This book became the foundational text of the Women in Development movement and initiatives in subsequent decades. In this book Boserup wrote about the gender division of labour in agriculture, and the labour contribution that women make to the household and informal economy: contributions that had never before been the stuff of economics of development. For the first time, it was being argued that women's contributions, both domestic and in the paid workforce, contributed to national economies. As an economist working for the United Nations, her committed and scholarly work inspired the UN Decade for Women between 1975 and 1985, and encouraged aid agencies to question the assumption of gender neutrality in the costs as well as in the benefits of development.

In the decades since its first emergence in the 1970s, the discourse and practice on women in development has undergone many shifts. These shifts have been based on evidence gathered through research in developing countries and the key challenges faced in practice. A major shift in the 1980s was in the understanding of why women, despite the UN-sponsored women's decade, continued to be systematically excluded from development; why, for example, agricultural development programmes continued to ignore women as farmers; why poverty alleviation programmes were targeted at best at families but mainly at men as heads of households; and why women were not being recognized as workers in production in the same way that men were.

The issue at hand, as pointed out by the Subordination of Women (SOW) research group, based at the Institute of Development Studies in Brighton, was that studies of women and development, or of the impact of development on women's positions, were erroneously using as their starting point the view that the problem is

**women**, so that the solutions being offered only sought to “reform” women and not the social environment in which they live. The SOW group suggested that the starting point should rather be **men and women**, and more specifically the socially constituted relations between them (Whitehead 1979). They further explained that because these relations were socially constituted they were not derived from biology. They found it useful to use the term **gender relations** to distinguish such social relations between men and women from those characteristics which can be derived from biological difference. Like other social relations, gender relations, as social constructs, are historically specific forms that relations between men and women take in a given society. Because these are social constructs and specific to societies and historical time, the socially constituted relations between women and men can and do change.

Taking their cue from this understanding, generations of development activists, experts and organizations have since initiated programmes, built conceptual and practical tools and trained and built capacity to make changes in gender relations happen. A key turning point was the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, which placed gender equality high on the agenda of government and non-government development institutions. This fuelled the need to raise gender awareness in institutions, to develop practical skills to plan and implement programmes, and to “engender” policymaking processes. The Beijing conference and work within development bureaucracies inevitably shaped the purpose and content of gender. From its origins as a tool for raising awareness, developing gender analysis and challenging power structures, gender knowledge became the handmaiden of mainstreaming gender in intractable, unaccountable bureaucracies where concerns for gender equality jostled for attention with other priorities. A plethora of manuals, checklists and tools have been developed worldwide for NGOs, large intergovernmental and multilateral bureaucracies to train people and to function as self-help guides.

This book, which is a collection of case studies in engagements on gender in production and marketing processes, follows this legacy. The gender and development agenda requires new energy and momentum, and initiatives such as this book will go a long way in renewing the agenda and breathing new meaning and life into what continues to be an intractable problem – development that is fair to both women and men.

The added value of this book is also that it is produced by specialists in other fields than gender which makes it a classic case of mainstreaming. Their engagement with gender and development theory has been robust as evidenced from the analytical framework developed to analyse the value chain initiatives. Gender and value chains as analytical categories are not strange bedfellows as is often imagined. On the contrary agricultural value chains are a starting point for doing gender-fair development, as the history of gender and development shows.

July 2012

# Preface

*Agri-ProFocus members:*

*Cordaid, Hivos, ICCO, KIT and Oxfam-Novib*

Value chain development is a key approach worldwide to increasing the incomes of small and medium producers and the economically active poor. In recent years, the active (but under-recognized) role of women in agricultural value chains has become more and more obvious. Development organizations need to understand the gender dynamics at play in value chains.

This book enthusiastically takes up the challenge of addressing gender in value chain work. It addresses gender at two intersecting levels: as a justice issue, in which both men and women should benefit from value chain gains, and as a means of building more robust and efficient chains.

The book is the culmination of a series of learning activities and events motivated through the Agri-ProFocus network<sup>1</sup> and starting in 2008. These began with a basic question: how to integrate gender in our value chain work? Through these activities, a wealth of critical issues emerged: How to make value chain analysis gender-sensitive? How to approach women as producers, farmers and traders? What differences are there between domestic and international markets, and between conventional and certified ones?

By organizing exchange events for practitioners in the Netherlands and in Africa, involving researchers and developing pilot programmes, the Agri-ProFocus network has succeeded in building a strong and diverse community of practice around this subject. International experts helped to validate and consolidate our concepts and understanding. An online gender in value chains network, <http://genderinvaluechains.ning.com>, engaged practitioners worldwide in sharing cases experiences and tools.

This book is the result of exchange by practitioners and academics using a “write-shop” (jointly writing a book in a workshop). It contains an easy-to-read analysis of many excellent examples from practice that convince us that there are many entry points and opportunities for addressing gender in value chain development: ways that benefit both the men and women involved and the success and profitability of the chain itself.

Agri-ProFocus members Cordaid, Hivos, ICCO, KIT and Oxfam-Novib provided the time and financial means to create this book. The 105 case abstracts that we received in the worldwide call for cases made the selection and writing process

---

1 Agri-ProFocus is a Dutch-rooted partnership of 35 NGOs, knowledge institutes, financial institutions, public sector agencies and private companies. With so-called Agri-Hubs of local actors in 10 African countries, it aims to promote farmer entrepreneurship in the context of food security.

complex. At the same time, they provided a good cross-section of actual practice, so giving a strong underpinning for the book. We are grateful to all those who have shared their experiences.

This book is the fourth in a series on value chain development by the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) and the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) and is the logical follow up to the three other books. One is called *Chain empowerment: Supporting African farmers to develop markets* (2006). The second is titled *Trading up: Building cooperation between farmers and traders in Africa* (2007). The third, on *Value chain finance*, was published in 2010.

This book provides arguments, concepts, strategies and tools to inspire practitioners to improve gender equity in value chains. It adds to the growing literature on value chain development and gender. We hope that it contributes to on-going exchange and mutual learning, and increases the effectiveness of the work on poverty reduction in our organizations.

At a time when gender is given a central place in the international food-security agenda, successful examples of how to mainstream it are key for designing programmes for economic growth and livelihoods. We hope this book contributes both to your practice and to the international debate.

# Acknowledgments

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- Contributors who did not attend the writeshop but who provided boxes, which enriched the text.
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- The many farmers, NGO staff, researchers and government officials whose knowledge and experiences are reflected in this book.

# Contributors

Many people contributed to this book. The list below gives the names of those who attended the writeshop in Nairobi, where much of text was written, discussed and revised. Their contact details and a short biography are given at the end of the book.

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# 1

## Introduction



*Written jointly by: Anna Laven, Rhiannon Pyburn and Roel Snelder*

### 1.1 Poverty and gender inequality in agriculture

Today, many interventions in the agricultural sector that aim at reducing poverty take value chains as a point of departure. In this book we share experiences as to how chains can work for the poor, with gender inequity as a starting point. We hope that this book provides a basis for further understanding, analysis and exploration of “inclusive” or “pro-poor” value chain development. “Pro-poor” is in some respects a contentious descriptive term. We use it as shorthand for “value chain development that includes and benefits the poor”.

Recognizing the gender dimension of poverty is important for two basic reasons:

- The first is that it is a matter of human rights. Although women and men both contribute to and benefit from rural development, women still lack legal and property rights, as well as access to finance and modern business practices (World Bank 2011a; 2011b). The economic gap between women and men continues to widen, as do the differences between women of different social categories including age, economic standing, caste and education (Sevefjord and Olsson, 2004).
- Second, it is a matter of improving agricultural business. Gender inequality produces inefficiencies, so is a root cause of poverty: when half of society is under-mobilized or excluded, this represents a lost opportunity for development and for business.

We use the concepts of gender equality and equity frequently in this book. Both concepts are explained in Box 1.1.

## Box 1.1. Gender equality and gender equity

### Gender equality

Gender equality is the concept that both men and women are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

### Gender equity

Gender equity means fairness of treatment for women and men according to their respective needs. This may include **equal** treatment, but often women and men need to receive **different** treatment in order to receive the same benefits and to experience their rights. In the development context, gender equity often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women (such as restrictions on mobility or access to education). Or it may mean projects are targeted to women only

*More information: KIT-SDGE (2010).*

## Poverty in agriculture

Most people in the world are poor, and most of the world's poor people earn their living from agriculture.<sup>1</sup> They work, for example, as wage labourers, farmers, small-scale processors or traders. Their circumstances are often difficult: roads are bad; distances between fields and markets are long; inputs, market information and services may not be available; and access to secure markets can be cumbersome (e.g., Cervantes-Godoy and Dewbre 2010, KIT and IIRR 2010).

Conditions in agriculture are especially hard for women. Although women represent at least half of the workforce in agriculture, they lag behind men in many ways. Often the work women do in agriculture is not visible, or it is simply not valued. They are often excluded from the more profitable aspects of agricultural enterprises. Land usually belongs to their husbands, brothers or fathers. Women are often ineligible to join cooperatives or receive credit, and are not targeted in technical training. Along with the burden of unpaid work at home, high levels of illiteracy and lack of bargaining power create significant economic disadvantages for women compared to their male counterparts. As a result they do not reach their potential as workers, entrepreneurs or consumers.

The denial of rights and opportunities based purely on an individual's sex is not only incompatible with social justice (DFID 2009); it is also a missed opportunity. When women are overlooked, they lack access to labour and trade markets, limiting potential contributions to the family income. For a rural business, overlooking or excluding women means reduced profits, decreased efficiency and

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1 These words were used by Theodore Schultz in his acceptance speech for the 1979 Nobel Prize in Economics, cited in Cervantes-Godoy and Dewbre (2010).

lower quality. For a country it means that economic growth falls behind what it could be (Kabeer 1999).

Despite these many disadvantages, women play critical roles in the agricultural sector. They are often heavily involved in growing food and cash crops and caring for livestock. They contribute to family businesses every day, and they are at the frontline when it comes to feeding their families and their nations (FAO 2010).

The importance of women in agriculture increases as men seek out paid work off-farm, and as rural women look for additional income in agriculture, mainly as wage labourers in labour-intensive crops (e.g., Muza 2009, Deere 2005). The trend towards more women being left to work in agriculture is known as the **feminization of agriculture** (e.g., World Bank 2008).

This trend may bring some advantages for the position of women in agriculture. In absence of men, women are responsible for taking care of the family farm (Muza 2009). With their husbands away, women not only participate in (even) more farm activities, but also start making marketing decisions. As labourers, women receive wages, often for the first time in their lives. Especially for young women, this provides an alternative to moving to town or finding a job as a maid. Financial independence can give young women more freedom, for example, to travel or to choose a future marriage partner (Deere 2005).

But the feminization of agriculture does not automatically mean that women reap the fruits of their labour. Unfortunately, the feminization of agriculture is also associated with the decreased viability of small-scale farming, in which smallholdings are less able to feed the family working the land. This is just one illustration of the vulnerable nature of women's work.

Here are some of the risks for women working in agricultural value chains:

- The work that women do is often insecure. For example, women tend to be hired as seasonal labour for only a few months of the year. Working conditions are often poor (Deere 2005).
- Women are often perceived as a source of cheap labour.
- The type of work women do can push them into (even) more marginalized positions.
- Productive work can become a serious burden for women who also have domestic responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, fetching wood and taking care of the children (see Box 1.2).
- An increased workload can come at the cost of other income-generating activities.
- Tensions within the household may rise, especially for married women who try to exert their greater bargaining power (e.g., Deere 2005).

These risks contribute to rising poverty and growing inequality between men and women.

## Box 1.2. Productive, reproductive and community work

Discussions about the economy and reducing poverty tend to focus on economic growth. Economic growth can certainly contribute to the development of a country, its citizens and private companies. But when conceived of as earnings and labour, it has limits. In particular, it recognizes only **productive work** – where people make things or provide services for money.

This does not bode well for people, mostly women, who do **reproductive work**: domestic and care work such as cooking, cleaning, childcare and looking after sick relatives, subsistence agriculture, and collecting water, fuel and wild food. These tasks take up a substantial amount of women's time and energy, and they make important contributions to the economy. It also ignores the many types of **community work** that fall largely to women: helping neighbours, organizing social events, and so on.

Reproductive and community work tends to be unpaid and taken for granted:

*“As citizens, workers, farmers and carers, women have been bearing the brunt of a type of economic development that prioritizes profit over human welfare and wellbeing: in which productive rather than reproductive work is valued. As a result, the role of women in local economies has often been unrecognized and undervalued” (Verhart and Pyburn 2010).*

The separation of productive work from reproductive (and community) work has had profound consequences for women's lives. Conventional economics confuses reproductive work with leisure, since time spent in unpaid labour is assumed to be non-working time. Yet, reproductive tasks clearly have the characteristics of “work”: they absorb a vast amount of time and energy, especially that of women and girls. Gender experts agree that data on reproductive labour should be incorporated into (macro)economic analysis, thereby “engendering” it (Terry 2007, Gutierrez 2003, p. 15).

In addition to these risks, women face a number of constraints. Many women face, especially in the global South, an unequal division of tasks within the **household**. When reproductive tasks are allocated more equally, or when arrangements are made for child care and other reproductive responsibilities, women have more time to engage in the formal sector or in paid work. Unequal decision-making power within the household leads to inefficiencies both in terms of labour and in the allocation of resources. Where women have a voice in how economic resources are spent within a household, the whole family benefits. This is well-documented. Having equal rights is one thing; being able to exercise those rights while maintaining respect from your household and community is quite another.

To add to their disadvantaged position, many women are handicapped in the **job market** due to their low education levels. As a result, most women workers in the global South are small traders, casual labourers, cleaners, home-workers doing piece-work, and unpaid workers in family enterprises, amongst other “hidden” roles in the informal sector (World Bank 2011a). This informal work is often combined with subsistence farming and tends to be inferior to paid employment in that earnings are lower and more irregular, working conditions are worse, there is less security, and there are no benefits such as pensions and sick leave (Terry 2007: 85–6).

## 1.2 Gender and value chains: Strange bedfellows?

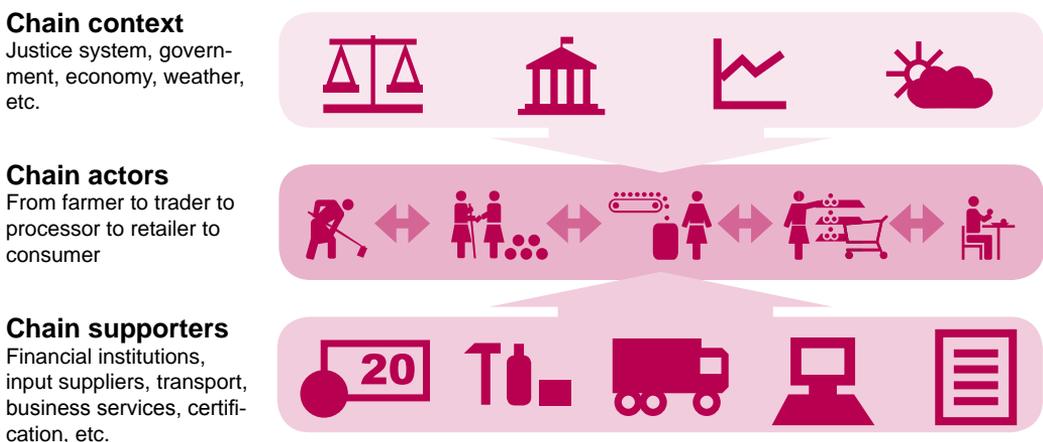
This book brings together two fields; **value chain analysis**, and **gender and development**. Both are discussed in more depth in Chapter 3. In this section we look at how these fields dovetail, and the advantages and challenges of bringing them together.

### *A value chain perspective*

A **value chain** refers to an entire system of production, processing and marketing from inception to the finished product. It consists of a series of **chain actors**, linked together by flows of products, finance, information and services (Figure 1.1). At each stage of the chain, the value of the product goes up because the product becomes more available or attractive to the consumer – hence the term “value” chain. Costs also accumulate at each stage of the chain.

Alongside the main chain actors, other individuals and organizations are often involved; they surround the chain actors providing them with services. We call them **chain supporters**.

Chain actors and chain supporters operate within a **context** that includes the larger economy, currency exchange rates, government economic policy, as well as governance, tax, regulatory and legal frameworks. This context may help the performance of the chain, for example by promoting a transparent, stable macroeconomic policy. Or it may hinder it by imposing restrictions or allowing corruption to flourish (Quirós 2007, Shepherd 2004, OECD 2006). The context may be influenced by advocacy movements (for example NGOs that work on



*Figure 1.1 A value chain consists of chain actors, chain supporters, and the chain context*

Source: adapted from KIT and IIRR (2010)

environmental or social issues) or by social structures (for example traditional social hierarchies within a community) (KIT and IIRR 2010).

Value chain development is a key concept in strategies to reduce rural poverty in developing countries. The basic idea is that value chains offer the farmer (and indeed all chain actors) the possibility to acquire new knowledge from actors elsewhere in the value chain (e.g., buyers, importers, certification bodies) (Humphrey and Schmitz 2000, Vargas 2001: 5).

An important concept in value chain thinking is that of **upgrading**. This idea highlights the options available to farmers and other rural entrepreneurs for obtaining higher and more stable returns.

For rural entrepreneurs – farmers, traders, processors and so on – agricultural value chains promise access to new markets as well as the opportunity to add value to their products. But recently there are growing concerns:

- Value chains are becoming more exclusive: they are excluding the poor.
- The conditions under which poor people are integrated into value chains are deteriorating.
- Inequalities are growing between the rich and the poor, as well as among sub-groups of poor people.

That makes it important to know who is participating in a value chain and who is not: men or women, different castes, people in different socio-economic positions, and so on. Further, we must understand the impact on these different categories of rural entrepreneurs of including them in a value chain.

It also provides a sound rationale for making the empowerment of weaker chain actors an important consideration. Involving these marginalized chain actors – “the poor”, women, certain ethnic groups – is referred to as **inclusive upgrading**. But an important issue that is sometimes missed is that people not only participate in and benefit from upgrading, but also have (or lack) control over these benefits and the process. Inclusive upgrading is not only about creating but also about controlling added value (see also Laven 2010, Daviron and Ponte 2005). So the question is, how can weaker chain actors both create and control the value of their products? Women-owned businesses face many more constraints than those run by men, and have more limited access to financial and other services (Mayoux 2009). And when a business where women are traditionally involved becomes more profitable, men often take over.

How to include rural women in agricultural value chains better? A promising approach is to combine a value chain approach with gender analysis: to identify constraints and opportunities for women in value chains by analysing the division of labour and women’s and men’s access to resources.

Chapter 3 will take the reader through the gender and development literature, showing how women’s role in economic development was already discussed in the 1970s (by the Danish economist Ester Boserup). There are massive benefits in engaging women more in agricultural value chains, making them visible, and

making sure that they are served. This is especially so in value chains for major commodities such as coffee, where women do most of the work (Mayoux 2009). For companies working in these kinds of chains, knowing who does what is important to address bottlenecks and allocate resources to make the company and the chain work better. Understanding gender inequalities is critical to address the weakest links in supply and marketing chains and the most urgent areas for upgrading quality and growth (Mayoux 2010). Because tasks are often separated by gender, neither the men nor women by themselves have a complete understanding of the workings of the whole value chain (or even all aspects of one level of the chain), let alone how the roles and responsibilities of different actors intersect and interact at different stages (Farnworth 2010). Generating and analysing this kind of information improves the value chain because the identity and roles of the actors are made transparent. It thus becomes clear for whom and where to target improvements.

## 1.3 About this book

### *From idea to print*

The idea for developing this book came about in early 2008 when HIVOS and Oxfam-Novib approached Agri-ProFocus (a network of Dutch development agencies) for help in setting up an exchange group on gender in value chains. Discussions within the network revealed a broad interest in the subject, eventually crystallized around the idea of preparing a book to bring together experience and thinking on the topic. A small meeting with several international experts assisted us in more clearly defining criteria for case selection. We also used this opportunity to articulate and prepare initial insights for the “Arguments” section of this book (see Chapter 2). We refer to these discussions throughout the book.

This book includes contributions from over 25 value chain projects in Latin America, Africa and Asia. These were selected from over 100 case abstracts received as a result of an open call for cases broadcast through the Agri-ProFocus network, its gender in value chains online platform ([genderinvaluechains.ning.com](http://genderinvaluechains.ning.com)), and the partner networks of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR), and donor agencies.

### *Profiles of individual men and women*

Alongside the 25 cases, we also present a number of boxes with details on terminology, a particular commodity or organization, or a programme that addresses gender equity.

Many of the boxes contain profiles of men and women who have a particular experience or perspective to share. These individual profiles were collected with

### Box 1.3. Boxes with individual profiles

Boxes containing profiles are marked with the icon to the right.



- 4.8 Bulbuly Begum: A dairy group leader in Bangladesh
- 4.11 Purwohadi: Husband of Suprati, a community organizer in Indonesia
- 5.2 Amsal Endale: A beekeeper in Ethiopia
- 5.7 Marina: A Ricomida restaurant entrepreneur in Bolivia
- 5.8 Jilo Gayo Tache: Making aloe vera soap in Ethiopia
- 5.9 Rahel Tamrat: From adviser to honey entrepreneur in Ethiopia
- 5.10 Lactéos Dona Esmilda: From small trader to dairy entrepreneur in Nicaragua
- 6.11 Paineto Baluku: One man's transformation
- 6.13 Badelal: Learning to appreciate women's self-help groups in India
- 6.16 Cattle help Srikantharasa Gnanaveni rebuild her life
- 7.5 Sabina Hernandez: From victim to board member in Peru
- 7.6 Gay Smith: Creating a "produced by women" coffee label
- 8.4 Carolina Jara: A socially responsible manager in Peru

a nod to feminist scholarship. Gender studies and feminist research methods include the documentation of life histories and oral histories of women over time. We wanted to bring in this aspect to help bring together the two fields of gender and development and value chains. These profiles provide colour and personal interest. They are listed in Box 1.3.

### **Audience**

This book is intended for staff of development organizations that use value chains to promote economic and social development in the global South. It challenges you to change – to rethink – how you work with value chains so as to improve gender equality. We outline why this is important in Chapter 2.

While we draw from gender studies and bring in a gender lens to bear on value chains, our key audience is not gender specialists or academics in the social sciences. Rather, we aim to offer practical insights for value chain practitioners into how gender inequity is being addressed in value chain interventions, and to analyse when certain strategies are most relevant.

### **The writeshop**

The bulk of this book was produced through an intensive participatory "writeshop" (a method pioneered by IIRR), held on 22–30 November 2010 in Nairobi,

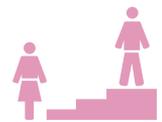
Kenya. The authors of the selected 25 cases were invited to the writeshop and sent guidelines on how to write up their cases. Each contributor brought a draft manuscript to the writeshop, focusing on how they had addressed gender equity in value chain development. The participants were also asked to bring with them other printed materials and photographs relevant to their case. The 40 or so participants included development professionals, researchers, and managers and staff of private companies and business development services. They were assisted by a team of facilitators, resource people (a specialist in value chain development or gender), artists and editors. They are listed at the front of the book; their contact details are given in Chapter 12.

After the writeshop, only minor editing was necessary to put the case descriptions into their final form. Editing and writing the core text (around the strategies) as well as the introduction, conclusions, arguments and the analytical framework, however, took more time. This was done by the KIT content editors and coordinators (Anna Laven and Rhiannon Pyburn). The language editor (Paul Mundy) in collaboration with KIT was responsible for finalizing the book.

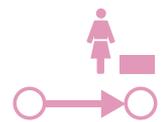
Throughout the writeshop process, the initial manuscripts were revised substantially and in many cases, were completely rewritten. Individual participants remain the main authors of their cases; their names are printed at the end of each case. The authors of the chapters 4–8 were the writeshop participants who wrote the initial draft cases, as well as the resource people who guided the process, and the KIT coordinators who rewrote and finalized the text after the writeshop.

### **Parts of this book**

**Chapter 2: Why focus on gender equity in agricultural value chains?** It can be hard to convince value chain actors and chain supporters to address gender equity. We recognize this challenge. This chapter outlines key arguments for addressing gender equity in agricultural value chain development. Sometimes a business case needs to be presented; at other times a social justice argument is needed; and at still other times, poverty is the starting point. You can draw from these three arguments to get colleagues, companies, farmer organizations and others on board as you start to address gender equity in your value chain initiatives.



**Chapter 3: Analytical framework.** This chapter presents the framework we use to analyse the 25 cases in the book. We begin by presenting and critiquing a “value chain empowerment” framework that will be familiar to readers who have followed the series of books by KIT and IIRR on value chains (see below). We then turn to the gender and development literature for inspiration in addressing the gaps that start to become apparent through a gender lens. The chapter ends with an explanation as to how the cases will be presented and analysed throughout the book.



With this foundation, Chapters 4–8 present five ways of approaching gender equity in value chain work. These strategies reflect current practices. We start with the entry point of typically female value chain activities and crops, and gradually move along the chain to new activities and then to involving different actors, right through to the consumer. The strategies also look around the chain in terms of the kinds of support needed for change to happen. Where in the value chain the strategy applies is shown in a small value chain map at the start of each section.

**Chapter 4: Mitigating resistance by building on tradition** builds on activities and chains where women are already active in order to avoid resistance from family members and communities. As such they are “low-hanging fruit” – a first step towards more inclusive chain development. This chapter looks at four domains where women are often active: shea (a type of nut common in West Africa), livestock, dairying and green agriculture. Most gender and value chain work falls under this category of mitigating resistance. This was very apparent in our call for cases. That is why it is the biggest section of the book.



**Chapter 5: Creating space for women** has two subchapters. The first looks at positioning women in male-dominated chains like beekeeping and dairying. The second explores female entrepreneurship through cases in Bolivia and Tanzania where women have become successful and visible entrepreneurs.



**Chapter 6: Organizing for change** has a different starting point. It takes four interventions that are seen as critical: capacity development, collective action, the sensitization of men and access to finance. Each of the subchapters looks at the conditions needed for these interventions to succeed and how to work with chain supporters (extension services, NGOs and finance organizations) who engage with farmers and primary processors.



**Chapter 7: Standards, certification and labels** takes a starting point further along the chain where consumers, lead firms and international standard-setting organizations play a role in prioritizing gender. The first subchapter looks at “produced by women” labels and seals and how women’s participation can be a selling point that earns a premium price for products. It illustrates this strategy with two cases on coffee in Latin America. The second subchapter looks at existing standards such as UTZ, Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance, and how the infrastructure of certification and compliance to a social or environmental standard can be used also to address gender.



**Chapter 8: Gender-responsible business** looks at the company link in a value chain. This area includes corporate social responsibility and shared value. This chapter explores what this means for a large multinational firm and a medium-sized Peruvian company.



**Chapter 9: Conclusions** brings together the lessons from the preceding chapters. We remark on trends related to the different strategies. We also return to the analytical framework and reflect on how it has worked out for us. We finish with a few words of critique and our perspective on what this book has done and what remains important for future thinking and practice.



**Chapter 10** outlines some useful tools and resource materials for gender and value chain work. For a more comprehensive and continually updated account of tools, please refer to the Agri-ProFocus website, [www.agri-profoc.us.nl/theme/gender-in-value-chains/](http://www.agri-profoc.us.nl/theme/gender-in-value-chains/).



Short biographies and contact details of all participants from the Nairobi write-shop in November 2010 can be found at the back of the book.

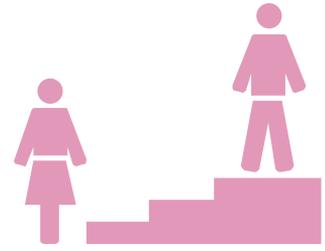
### ***Other books in this series***

This book is the fourth in a series on value chains published by KIT and IIRR. Other titles in this series have focused on the empowerment of farmers in value chains (KIT, IIRR and Faída MaLi 2006), the role of traders (KIT and IIRR 2008) and value chain finance (KIT and IIRR 2010).



# 2

## Why focus on gender equity in agricultural value chains?



*Written jointly by: Rozemarijn Apotheker, Rhiannon Pyburn and Anna Laven*

### 2.1 Presenting the arguments

In agricultural value chains,<sup>1</sup> women make up a large part of the work force, but they are often disadvantaged. Their rights are frequently violated, and their contribution to the economy is largely invisible. For a rural business, overlooking or excluding women means reduced profits, decreased efficiency and lower quality. For a country it means that economic growth falls behind what it could be (Kabeer 1999).

In this chapter we argue that focusing on gender equity in agricultural value chains is good for women, for society and for business!

Despite there being compelling reasons for a focus on gender equity in agricultural value chains, interventions all too often and too easily put gender issues aside or treat them as an add-on requirement included to satisfy donors or public-interest groups. It seems that not everyone involved in agricultural value chains is convinced about the need to improve the condition and position of women. This chapter presents three sets of arguments to appeal to a range of different stakeholders.

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1 This chapter builds upon discussions during the Agri-ProFocus pre-meeting and contributions by participants in this meeting: Cristina Manfre (ACDI/VOCA), Linda Mayoux (independent), Carolien Kernkamp (WO=MEN), Ambra Galina (IFAD), Cathy Farnworth (IFAD), and Karin Astrid Siegmann (ISS). We would like to thank Anouka van Eerdewijk and Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay for their reviews and comments on this chapter. We also want to acknowledge Noortje Verhart for ongoing collaboration and intellectual sparring on gender and value chain work within KIT.

The first set of arguments is about **social justice**: the fair distribution of advantages, assets and benefits among all members of a society (Glenbow 2011). Denying rights and opportunities based purely on someone's sex is incompatible with this ideal (DFID 2009, Manfre and Siegmann 2010). Showing how human rights translate differently for men and for women can support women's organizations and other NGOs (for example) in lobbying for gender equity and making governments, organizations and companies accountable. It can also be a compelling argument for governments to ensure that their policies and regulations contribute to achieving human rights for everyone.

The second set of arguments that there is a direct linkage between **gender equity and poverty reduction** is embraced by large development institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and by the Millennium Development Goals. A striking majority - approximately 70% - of the poor in developing countries are women (Terry 2007). If women cannot contribute fully to the economy, this results in high costs both in terms of economic and human development (c.f. Mayoux 2009, Elson 1999, Gutierrez 2003, Oxfam 2011).

The third set of arguments takes more of a **business perspective**. It acknowledges that "earning a living, having access to markets and even paying taxes is influenced by whether you are male or female" (Gutierrez 2003). It frames gender inequity in agricultural value chains as a missed business opportunity, so is especially appealing for businesses that are part of such chains. Investing in gender equity can smooth both the operation of individual businesses as well as the overall chain. There are a variety of reasons why gender inequity in agricultural value chains is a missed business opportunity. We distinguish four sub-arguments:

- The opportunity of serving business women
- Women as potential client base
- Improving a company's reputation
- Women managers' contributions to profits.

We elaborate these arguments below.

### **Human rights translate differently for men and women**



*Constance is a widow in Rwanda. Women do not have full rights to land ownership in this country; they depend on their husbands or other male family members for land. Since her husband died, Constance has been able to grow food only in a tiny garden behind her house. She sells what she can at the market, and then buys cassava (which is cheap) to feed her children. Without the right to own land, Constance cannot earn enough to lift herself and her family out of poverty.*

People have rights. These rights are embodied in national legislation and in international treaties such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Human rights are tools or claims that men and women can use to push for improved social justice on several levels (individuals, groups, societies and states). Governments and organizations are accountable: they have a duty to uphold human rights, and people can claim their rights through them. We can distinguish two basic categories of rights: **positive** rights (like the right to education or health care), and **negative** rights (such as a woman's right not to be subjected to violence from her partner) (Terry 2007: 25). These rights are set out in a range of international treaties (Box 2.1).

Human rights are applicable to both men and women. However, in practice, "positive" rights are often denied to women, and "negative" rights are routinely violated. This happens far more often to women than to men. Across the globe, women confront manifold human rights violations – when they cannot participate in the decisions that affect their lives or claim fair political representation, when they face discrimination in employment, when they are denied entitlement to land and property, or when they suffer violence within their own home. Rights violations include when women and girls are prevented from going to school or obtaining health care, or are subject to harmful traditional practices (UN Women 2011a).

The United Nations human development report (UNDP 1995) states that: "In no society today do women enjoy the same opportunities as men." Because of their sex, women face major obstacles, which intrinsically influence their human rights. Some examples:

- Violence against women is one of the biggest causes of deaths and disability among women aged 15–44 years (Terry 2007).
- There is international recognition that women bear the brunt of modern conflicts, including where rape is a weapon of war (UN Women 2011b).
- High rates of female illiteracy continue to exist, hampering equal access to education, which is crucial for the full enjoyment of the right to freedom of opinion and expression (UNDP 2010).
- Across all areas of life, whether in political bodies or corporate boardrooms, women have a limited say in the decisions that affect them, and they are treated as having a second-class status. Women lag far behind men in access to land, credit and decent jobs (UN Women 2011b).

Despite the various treaties, violations of women's rights are still widespread. All countries are affected. Women need stronger laws, rules and regulations, backed by implementation and services that protect against and prevent violation (UN Women 2011b).

Alongside these treaties, many organizations, both large and small, are trying to enhance women's rights and gender equality. Take for example, efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, which have provided a basic roadmap for development since their adoption in September 2000. Gender equality is the third

## Box 2.1. Key treaties and conferences on women's human rights

### 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Sets out a vision and basic principles.

### 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Women and men have equal rights to everything covered in the covenant.

### 1976 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Women and man have equal rights in areas covered by the covenant.

### 1981 Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The key international agreement on women's human rights, which is also described as the international bill of women's rights. Ratified by 185 UN member states, this convention encompasses a global consensus on the changes that need to take place in order to realize women's human rights (UN Women 2011a). Many institutions, governments and international organizations see gender equality as a basic human right.

### 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child

Among other things, protects girls from early marriage and harmful traditional practices. It defines anyone under the age of 18 years as a child.

### 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna

Statement made during this UN conference: "The human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights."

### 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo

Among other things, this conference focused on supporting women's empowerment and making family planning universally available by 2015.

### 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing

Conference on the action governments need to take to realize the rights in the 1981 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

*Based on Terry (2007: 28–9)*

goal, but is also integral to achieving all eight goals, from preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS to sustaining the environment in the face of climate change (UN Women 2011a). Although opinions differ on how the goals – and specifically goal 3 – are implemented, the existence of goal 3 does show that gender equality is high on the global agenda (Kabeer 2003).

Once gender equality is understood as a human right, it should not need additional justification (Manfre 2010). This means that the legitimacy of efforts to advance gender equality does not depend on proving its usefulness for other purposes, such as poverty alleviation or economic growth (UNIFEM 2007: 13). It is also possible to turn the argument around:

*“The question we have to ask is not whether trade liberalization is good or bad for women as a group, but how trade policy can contribute to the achievement of human rights for everyone” (Association for Women’s Rights in Development, in Terry 2007:81).*

Why should Constance (the widow in Rwanda) not have the same right to own land as her brother? It not only deprives her of a reasonable livelihood, but also impoverishes her children. Should we support Constance in owning her own land because it is her right? Or instead, because she deserves the opportunity to step out of poverty? Or because we think that her children should have the chance to live a better life and to be schooled? Or because it would boost the local economy if she were able to sell (cash) crops on the market? All of these rationales are legitimate, but the heart of the matter is that every person – male or female – has the same basic rights as a human being. And these basic human rights need to be protected, made explicit and implemented.

Companies involved in agricultural value chains might get overwhelmed by the task of committing to a gender policy. Pyburn and Verhart (2011) saw this concern raised repeatedly in interviews with international coffee, cocoa and tea companies based in Europe: they lamented “we are just one company, what can we do? The problem is too big!” Businesses often do not know how to deal with issues related to gender, although including gender practices in a business does not have to be difficult at all. In this book we present several cases that illustrate just how straightforward it can be.

### ***Fighting poverty is hard if you’re (gender) blind***

*Hu Xiaohua is a farmer in Gongshan, China. She is responsible for taking care of the livestock and subsistence crops around the homestead. A government initiative was set up in her region to enhance the agro-pastoralist livelihoods of farmers in the province. However, although the project focused on the work that is done mainly by women (taking care of pigs, chickens and subsistence crops), men received the training and services. As a result, the household economies and food security have not improved in the province, and Hu Xiaohua and her family have not reaped any benefits. (Based on Shen and Qian 2009).*



The first Millennium Development Goal is to cut poverty in half by 2015. A logical first step is to look at who the poor people are, and what they need in order to break free of poverty (ODI 2008). The constraint for women is their sex: they are excluded or poorly served just because they are women. These constraints make it harder for women than for men to transform their capacities and skills into income or well-being. Clearly, gender relations affect development outcomes (Manfre 2010).<sup>1</sup>

If we begin by looking at poverty as an income issue, it is well documented that women have a harder time than men in securing an income for themselves and their families. Across a wide range of cultures and levels of economic development, women tend to do the unpaid “reproductive” or care work, while men tend to take up the paid, “productive” activities (UNDP 1997, Cagatay 1998a, World Bank et al. 2009). Furthermore, when women do paid work, the return on their labour is lower than the return on men’s labour: women are paid less than men for the same work. This situation is not unique to developing countries; it is also true in most countries around the world (Terry 2007, World Bank 2011a).

The United Nations human development report (UNDP 2010) compares the “gender inequality index” with poverty and inequality in income. It finds that the three are strongly related, and reducing inequality is likely to reduce poverty and overall inequality in a society. For example, the report states:

*“Providing girls and women with equal educational opportunities, medical care, legal rights and political representation is not only socially just, but one of the best possible investments in development for all people.”*

The UK Department for International Development’s strategic vision (DFID 2011) also emphasizes the need to focus on women:

*“Across the developing world, girls and women continue to bear a disproportionate burden of poverty. [...] And we know that the benefits of investing in girls and women are transformational – for their own lives and for their families, communities, societies and economies. Empowering girls and women has multiplier effects for economic growth and achieving all of the Millennium Development Goals.”*

An International Monetary Fund working paper on gender equality (Stotsky 2006) states that:

*“Evidence from the World Bank review and other recent studies suggests that societies that increase women’s access to education, health care, employment, and credit and that narrow differences between men and women in economic opportunities increase the pace of economic development and reduce poverty.”*

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1 Cristina Manfre, Agri-ProFocus pre-meeting 2010

The larger development institutions such as the World Bank, the major UN agencies and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee support these claims that women's empowerment have important payoffs in the field of poverty alleviation (Kabeer 2001; SIDA 2009; Mayoux 2009).

Because women face more constraints than men, they tend to be poorer – as does the world as a whole. Diminishing these constraints would help to reduce the root causes of poverty and vulnerability and contribute to sustainable, pro-poor growth. The relationship between gender equality and sound economic development is becoming increasingly apparent. Both women and men have to participate in development efforts if such efforts are to be effective and sustainable, and if both are to benefit from them. When the potential of women (and men) is harnessed to full capacity in development, the need for special compensatory support targeted only to women diminishes (SIDA 2009).

While the link between poverty reduction and gender may seem quite clear, practical implementation still lags far behind. Policies and programmes often fail to assess the influence of gender, and therefore fail to improve the lives of poor women and their families (Beneria and Bisnath 1997). Especially in agriculture, where an average of 70% of the poor work (most of them women), women's economic empowerment should be high on the agenda. Yet gender issues are explicitly incorporated into less than 10% of all official development assistance directed toward agriculture (World Bank et al. 2009).

As the story of Hu Xiaohua illustrates, when agricultural projects fail to assess gender roles, resources are not allocated to the people who actually do the work. While women often perform the majority of agricultural tasks, resources, inputs and technologies to promote agricultural projects tend to be targeted towards men. To achieve growth and equity it may be that putting these resources, capacity-building programmes and technologies in the hands of women can have big implications for poverty reduction.

The argument that fighting poverty is hard when you are gender blind can be interpreted as an “instrumental” argument: that is to say that women's participation is utilitarian – that their potential should be harnessed in order to overcome poverty. This kind of argumentation was critiqued in the 1990s. It prioritizes “what development needs from women over what women need from development” (Razavi and Miller 1995). And it fails to do justice to women's right to be involved in development (including the development of value chains); instead it treats such involvement as a merely a means to an end.

Box 2.2 explains that poverty has also other dimensions: it is about a lack of choices. This book takes this broader view of poverty.

## Box 2.2. Poverty is about a lack of choices

Poverty has dimensions far beyond income alone: it also involves a lack of capacity and room for manoeuvre to make choices that improve livelihoods, feelings of vulnerability or insecurity, and low self-esteem.

Women are also “poorer” than men when it comes to these non-economic dimensions of poverty. Control over income, as well as biases in the labour market and social exclusion experienced in economic and political institutions contribute to the vulnerability of women to chronic poverty (ODI 2008, DFID 2009, Cagatay 1998a, Prügl and Lustgarten 2006, Terry 2007). Dignity in work and economic equity are important in everyone’s life (Manfre 2010) and in many cases, women have less access to these important values. If a woman’s primary form of access to resources is as a dependent member of the family, her capacity to make strategic choices is likely to be limited (Kabeer 2003). Women may work long and hard, but they often do not benefit directly if men control the money and make the economic decisions. Amartya Sen (1981, 1986) describes these values as “entitlements” and having the freedom to choose over your own life.

## Gender equity is a missed business opportunity

### Serving women is good for business and the economy



*Mona does all kinds of work on her farm. Recently her husband, John, joined a group of farmers and received training on post-harvest practices. John has passed this knowledge on to his wife. Mona is trying to apply what she has learned. She knows that it helps her to produce better-quality maize, for which the farmer organization is willing to pay a better price. But Mona cannot cope. The new practices are very labour-intensive. She has no money to pay for them and has no access to any type of credit. So she has stopped investing in producing high-quality maize and has gone back to selling her maize at a low price to traders.*

Like many other women farmers, Mona as a rural entrepreneur, is underserved. She lacks access to credit for making the required investments in her farm, so she can start producing and selling higher quality maize to the farmer organization. The bank gives credit only to groups or to landowners.

In most agricultural production, women play a considerable role and form at least half of the labour force. But they are often not acknowledged for these contributions, and are thus invisible. Female entrepreneurs often face institutional barriers in financial and credit markets. Consequently, many are underserved and have limited access to markets (Manfre 2010, Farnworth 2010). Because female farmers control less land, use fewer inputs and have less access to important services such as extension advice, they produce less than men (FAO 2011). This is very inefficient: it reduces productivity, the quality and volume of goods, the quality of marketing, and the level of investments in farming (Oxfam 2011, Manfre 2010).

To serve women better, services, technology, credit and input should be steered towards them (APF 2010). That may mean designing services and technology to

suit their needs, and ensuring that they can use them effectively – for example by providing training and recognizing and removing barriers that prevent women from taking advantage of them.

In arguing that serving women serves business and the economy, there is a risk of being critiqued for including women merely as a way to raise profits. We run the risk of falling into the limits of the “efficiency discourse”, which feminists have struggled to get past for a long time. This concentrates on women’s productive roles and ignores their reproductive and community responsibilities. Promoting women’s participation in economic activities risks overburdening them with “productive” work, while hiding their reproductive and community contributions. This holds little promise of improving women’s lives if it is not explicitly combined with other rationales.

On the other hand, this argument can be appealing to business, and does not require any outside intervention from government or public pressure. For that reason it can help to involve persuade business to invest in gender equity.

### **Women present new market opportunities as buyers, suppliers and consumers**



*Trish is a conscientious citizen, living in Toronto, Canada. She buys healthy, organic food for her family and pays attention to the brands that she supports through her purchases to make sure that the companies are not using child labour or running sweat-shops. She cares. As a working mother with two young daughters, she tries to set an example by buying gifts – handicrafts and so on – at the Fairtrade shop. She likes the idea of helping women in other countries with her purchasing power, and she thinks it’s important for her girls to grow up knowing that many people in other parts of the world live in less privileged situations than them. And Trish empathizes with other women who, like herself, try to balance home, work and community activities. When she saw a promotion in her local co-op for coffee grown and processed by women, she was delighted to try it out. When she read the label more closely and learned that the company was co-owned by the female farmers, she was really impressed and happy to pay a little more for “doing the right thing”.*

Women are invisible and underserved suppliers and buyers in many agricultural value chains. But they are also major consumers and target groups for certain products. Knowing better what women consumers value allows for a better understanding of potential and emerging markets and can increase the client base of companies (Mayoux 2010, Manfre 2010).

On the marketing side, sensitive consumers, like Trish, can be targeted. Women have a voice as consumers, voters and social decision-makers. If women like Trish know that in purchasing a particular product they are supporting women suppliers from a distance, then a new link in the value chains is made: between the supplier and the consumer. This provides opportunities for niche markets, possibly linked to Fairtrade or organic certification. Examples already exist, includ-

ing some of those introduced in this book. Take the coffee industry for example. Chapter 7 describes two women-only coffee cooperatives, Café Femenino in Peru, and Con Manos de Mujer in Guatemala. They supply large coffee-retailers which are eager to meet consumer interest in social responsibility (Oxfam 2011). Their marketing strategy relies on the fact that the coffee is produced by women, from planting to harvesting and processing. This shows that women in agriculture increasingly supply national and international markets with traditional high-value niche products (Farnworth 2010).

Because they are underserved, women can be new clients for service providers. This requires some firms to let go of preconceived notions of who participates in agriculture. In some cases, explicitly targeting women in business practices or business development services can also open doors to new sources of funding (APF 2010).

### Profiling gender sensitivity can bolster a company's reputation



*Chile G Ltd had a great product: a high-quality cashew that was selling very well in multiple markets. But this success was threatened when a curious journalist started asking the women who sorted the nuts in India about their pay, benefits and working conditions. He learned some disturbing facts: the women sat on the floor to work for more than 10 hours at a time in a dusty, crowded environment. They were paid a fraction of what the men who worked for the company got, had no opportunities to do other work within the company, and had to undergo mandatory pregnancy tests before they were hired! A damning story was published that exposed the company to harsh international criticism. Many contracts were forfeited as the buyers did not want to be tainted by the bad press. This negative exposure pressured the company's management to articulate and implement a robust corporate social responsibility strategy that included specific policies to support female employees and improve the conditions and opportunities of female supply chain actors. The company had not thought very much about its suppliers before the journalist stepped in. Today Chile G Ltd is back on track with a good record for meeting its corporate social responsibility claims, which it communicates proudly.*

Communication with consumers is becoming ever more important in our globalizing world, where consumers have more choices than ever and are increasingly able to trace the products that they buy. More and more, consumers are choosing products that they believe are the outcome of a process that is environmentally and socially fair (like Trish in Toronto).

A reason to involve women fairly and equitably in supply chains is to communicate that decision to the rest of the world, and to improve the company's reputation. Chile G was pressured into that decision by a negative press. But companies can decide to do so long before that. Improving the livelihoods of women can be a strategic choice for the company to improve its reputation and public profile (Manfre 2010, Pyburn and Verhart 2011). A strong gender policy

can be a part of a company's corporate social responsibility strategy. Promoting women can even be a part of the branding of the product – selling gender equity in product advertising.

Commitments to gender equality (e.g., basic rights and principles at work) as well as to the rights of peripheral workers (such as migrant or seasonal workers, many of whom are women) (Siegmann 2010) can bolster a business's reputation. The opposite is also true: violation of women's rights presents a business risk – as with Chile G Ltd.

Companies have to be careful when using gender as a selling point. Emphasizing gender in a company's publicity leads to the danger of "gender-washing" – similar to "green-washing" on environmental issues – where a company says the right things, without real actions behind the words. What is most important is for the right policies to be in place and to be implemented. Communication should be backed by robust implementation and continual improvement. A balance between proud communication and humble hard work on these issues needs to be struck. Management commitment is important. The story of Cynara in Peru (Case 8.2) illustrates this.

### When women are in management positions, profits go up



*The popular US television programme "Mad Men" epitomizes the "old boy's network" mentality and the work situation of American women that predominated in the 1950s and 1960s. In a fictional advertising company in New York, men are the decision-makers, the management and executives, who do pretty much as they please; women are for the most part underpaid and harassed secretaries who are granted very little respect. But then there's Peggy. And she cannot be ignored because she not only works hard and is talented, but she also brings in another point of view. Her standpoint is different from that of her male colleagues and she sees different opportunities – things that appeal more to female consumers.*

Although Peggy's story is part of a fictional prime-time television series, we can nonetheless draw out some lessons. And, in fact, those lessons are backed by research. Women not only enhance economic growth by increasing production, they also improve management. A Fortune 500 study demonstrated that gender diversity in management ensures better decision making within a company and leads to higher profits (Catalyst 2004, Women to the Top 2001, Mayoux 2010).

There are several reasons for this. First, a company's performance will improve if recruitment is broad and can draw from all the potential talent in a particular population, not just half.

Second, investing in diversity – be it gender, ethnicity, language, religion or other – has positive results. In *Mad Men*, Peggy's participation in management improved the company's results, not only because of the skills she brought to the position, but also because of her different standpoint. People from different

vantage points offer different perspectives. Men and women bring different experiences and different perspectives to the table, and this diversity enriches decision-making. Combining the skills of different kinds of employees enhances their knowledge, experiences and creativity.

In addition, women and men possess gender-specific knowledge and expertise related to the value chain. Neither men nor women alone have a complete understanding of the business and its consumer base because they see it from different angles. But together, they cover much more ground. Good business management requires the involvement of both men and women.

Third, a mixed, diverse team also enhances the ability of a company to meet customer's needs and expectations. The more a company mirrors its consumers, the better it is able to respond to the market and evolving market needs (Women to the Top 2001).

This line of reasoning on the importance of diversity is true for big companies, but how valid is this for smaller rural businesses and farmer organizations? The Cynara story (Case 8.2) shows that for smaller companies in rural areas, involving women in all levels of a company also makes business sense. This medium-sized artichoke company in Peru has incorporated gender equality into its corporate agenda, from production to management. For agricultural cooperatives this diversity in management and member base is also important. This kind of organization should serve both the interests of its male and female members.

Of course, including women in all levels in a company, including management, is not just a way to raise profits. Nevertheless better profits resulting from a more representative and diverse management team might provide an (additional) incentive to hire women managers.

## 2.2 Which arguments to use?

This section has presented three sets of arguments for gender equity in agricultural value chains (Box 2.3).

These arguments can be used to engage people from different disciplines and organizations. Although distinct, they are interrelated.

Arguments 1 and 2 come from a rights-based starting-point, while the third set of arguments is based on a business view. Not all the arguments apply to all situations, but social justice (argument 1), for example, does: women have human rights and these are not being respected.

All three sets of arguments require interventions, albeit at different levels and from different actors. For example, the government plays a crucial role in implementing treaties and meeting the Millennium Development Goals. They also play a controlling role if rights are being violated. For business, outside intervention is not always needed. For example, businesses may choose to comply with vol-

### Box 2.3. Why gender equity in value chains?

#### Social justice



Human rights translate differently for men and women

#### Poverty reduction



Fighting poverty is hard if you're (gender) blind

#### Business opportunities



Serving women is good for business and the economy



Women present new market opportunities as buyers, suppliers and consumers



Profiling gender sensitivity can bolster a company's reputation



When women are in management positions, profits go up

untary standards. Businesses themselves are the drivers behind the change. In other cases, public or private interventions are needed to force business to change harmful operations.

Which arguments should you use? That depends on your target group. If you are talking to a company director, you may want to draw on a corporate social responsibility argument; but you might be equally compelling in arguing from a human rights standpoint: that the company has a moral and legal responsibility to meet international conventions. If you have to convince a local NGO to address

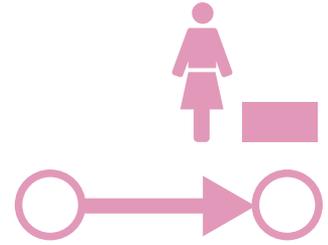
gender inequity, you may refer to the argument that fighting poverty is hard if you're (gender) blind.

### ***Overlaps among the arguments***

While we presented these arguments in three groups, they are in fact interconnected and overlapping. Together they form a solid rationale for addressing gender equity in value chains. Plainly stated, this is that economic development needs to include women in a fair way in order to be successful, robust and sustainable. Similarly, women need access to economic development and control over income in order to prosper and overcome poverty.

# 3

## Analytical framework



*Written jointly by: Rhiannon Pyburn and Anna Laven*

In this chapter we build an analytical framework to serve us as we move into the strategy chapters of the book. We take the reader through the process that members of the Agri-ProFocus learning trajectory, the Global Standards Initiative<sup>1</sup>, together with members of the Sustainable Economic Development and Social Development and Gender Equity teams at KIT, underwent in developing an analytical framework for gender equity in value chain development.

**Chapter 3.1** describes our starting point, which was the most recent thinking on empowering farmers within value chains. An analytical tool that captures the heart of this thinking is the chain empowerment matrix developed by KIT et al. (2006). We introduce this matrix as a basis of understanding value chain empowerment.

However, we were confronted with the limits of this matrix when we started to ask questions like: Who are the farmers? Why are they positioned as they are? How can women have more say in decision-making through the chain, and how can they diversify into additional chain activities?

**Chapter 3.2** pinpoints these gaps as we make a gender critique of the chain empowerment matrix. Recognizing its strengths, we also need to find additional explanations to capture what is happening when looking at value chain development using a gender lens. This subchapter examines what the chain empowerment matrix overlooks when it comes to women farmers and women entrepreneurs.

With this critique as a foundation, **Chapter 3.3** endeavours to engender value chain analysis. It draws on the gender and development literature for insights on dynamics that are otherwise missed. Bringing in a gender approach means redefining chain empowerment; it requires re-examining how we engage in value

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1 The Global Standards Initiative was a three-year (2009–11) collaboration between four Dutch development organizations: Hivos, Oxfam-Novib, Solidaridad, and the Royal Tropical Institute (in 2010, also the coffee certifier 4C). The aim was to explore how participation in certified coffee, tea and cocoa chains affected gender equity: that is to say, how certification to international social and environmental standards like Fairtrade, Organic, UTZ Certified, Rainforest Alliance and so on, impacts on gender equity at the production and basic processing levels. For a sense of some of the findings, see [www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXkRWzm1Bf8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXkRWzm1Bf8)

chains from a different perspective. A gender approach offers concepts, thinking and transformative potential that means re-thinking our starting point.

In **Chapter 3.4** we bring together the essence of chain empowerment with key concepts from the gender literature, and present a new framework for empowering women in value chain development.

**Chapter 3.5** explains how we use the dimensions to analyse the 25 cases in this book, and links the framework to the strategies addressed.

## 3.1 A starting point: Chain empowerment

The book *Chain empowerment: Supporting African farmers to develop markets* (KIT et al. 2006) introduces a “chain empowerment” framework based on the notion that empowering small-scale farmers is vital for sustainability. According to this book, chain empowerment is about increasing the capacities of farmers to add value to the activities they are involved in and to become involved in chain management. This framework can be summarized by two basic questions:

- Who does what in the chain?
- Who determines how things are done? (KIT et al. 2006).

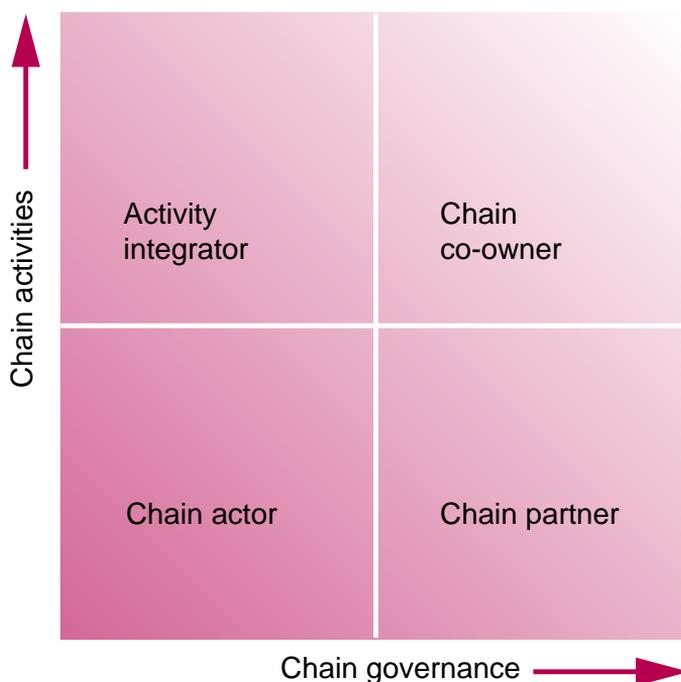
Sometimes farmers are concerned only with production: they prepare land, plant seeds, apply fertilizer, control pests and weeds, and harvest the crop. But they may also be involved in activities further down the chain, including sorting and grading, processing or trading their produce. If farmers are involved in a wide range of such **chain activities** in addition to production, this can contribute to their empowerment.

However, chain empowerment also requires that these producers gain economic power by becoming involved in managing the chain (Figure 3.1). Farmers can participate in various aspects of management, or **chain governance**, such as controlling the terms of payment, defining grades and standards, or managing innovation. Important questions include how to obtain this power and, more generally, what kind of strategies contribute to empowerment.

This matrix is a tool for strategic thinking about chain development. When farmers are only producing, they start at the lower left corner, as a basic **chain actor**. From there, by increasing the activities they do in the value chain, or by getting more involved in chain governance, farmers shift their position within the four quadrants. They have a starting position and move towards one of the four quadrants from there. The best position of a farmer is not necessarily in the upper-right quadrant, but depends on the specific situation, and may change over time.

The matrix illustrates four empowerment strategies:

1. **Upgrading as a chain actor:** Farmers do what they do better. For example, farmers become crop specialists with a clear market orientation.



Source: KIT et al. (2006)

Figure 3.1 Chain empowerment matrix

2. **Upgrading by adding value through vertical integration.** Farmers enter into activities further up the chain. For example, they move into joint processing and marketing in order to add value. This implies moving vertically up in the matrix, into the “activity integrator” quadrant.
3. **Upgrading by developing chain partnerships.** Farmers build long-term alliances with buyers, centred on shared interests and mutual growth. This means moving horizontally into the “chain partner” quadrant.
4. **Upgrading by developing ownership over the chain.** Farmers become owners of chain enterprises. For example, they build direct linkages with consumers or become shareholders in a retail company. This implies moving into the “chain co-owner” quadrant.

The chain empowerment matrix allows us to understand the different positions farmers take within a chain, and how their positions can improve. In this framework, empowerment is about the farmers’ ability to both create and control value (see also Daviron and Ponte 2005). It allows us to think strategically about chain development: it helps us to make sense of reality. When the Agri-ProFocus working group began to look at gender in value chains, it used this framework as a starting point (Laven et al. 2009).

Let us reflect on what this matrix might mean for a female farmer.

## Juanita's "empowerment" through upgrading in the mango chain

*Juanita works hard both at home and in providing food for her family. When she began to grow mangoes for the local market, she hoped to gain some additional income. Through extension and support from the mango cooperative, Juanita learned how to produce high-quality mangoes, and when the best moment was to collect them for the market. She became an expert in her community for mango production – she was a crop specialist with a clear local market orientation.*

*But all was not rosy. Juanita's husband took the fruit to the market and kept the extra money. After a while, Juanita decided that she wanted to take the mangoes to the market to better understand the needs of her buyers, and to know how much money was earned from the mango sales. There she learned that her customers missed mangoes when they were out of season. They showed interest when Juanita suggested that she dry them for sale in those months. So she did. She began cutting, drying and packaging mangoes from the height of the season, when the prices were lowest due to high availability, for sale during the off-season.*

In moving from just producing mangoes to sales and then to processing, Juanita performed better as a chain actor and had entered into activities higher up the chain. In the chain empowerment framework, she had moved vertically into the "activity integrator" quadrant. But the framework does not reveal whether Juanita, in addition to creating more value, also had more control over this income. It does not tell us whether she enjoys the extra income, or whether her husband gets to manage it. It does not show us that Juanita's workload has increased. She still does the cooking and cleaning, looks after her children, grows food in her garden for her family, and tends the mango trees; now she also has to go to the market twice a week and process the mangoes for sale in the off-season. While she is happy with her family's extra income, her workload has increased substantially, and she is tired.

When we bring the gender angle into the story, we see some of the limitations of the otherwise very useful chain empowerment matrix. We need new tools to address this complexity. Using the matrix as a starting point, we add elements to it to explore the gender dimensions of value chain development.

## 3.2 A gender critique of upgrading strategies

A gender perspective poses a new set of questions in the chain empowerment framework, related to who is able to upgrade and how. In addition, a gender perspective addresses questions related to the household and institutional levels.

The concept of "upgrading" (represented as a movement within the chain empowerment matrix) highlights ways that small rural entrepreneurs can obtain better

returns (create value) and control this value. But if we talk about gender-based inequality we refer not only to inequality in terms of income and control over income, but also to inequality in terms of the opportunities men and women have for expanding their capabilities. The different opportunities and constraints that shape a farmer's actions and his or her capabilities are invisible in the chain empowerment matrix.

Gender inequality poses constraints to value chain development. In the following paragraphs, we show how upgrading may work differently for women and men. We first tease out the questions that need to be answered in order to understand how chain empowerment strategies can benefit women. We then turn to the gender literature for new insights to address those questions.

### **Upgrading as chain actor**

For a woman farmer, this strategy means getting better at what she does. For example, Juanita learned how to produce higher-quality mangoes. While this sounds good at first, a closer look may be disappointing.

Women's contributions are often not visible or valued relative to those of the menfolk. Women may well be "crop specialists" with detailed knowledge of particular aspects of production and processing, but they are not recognized as such. Does Juanita's additional know-how and extra work in processing translate into recognition within her household? We just don't know.

### **Upgrading as an activity integrator**

The second strategy is about adding value by engaging in a wider range of activities in the chain. Juanita started processing and marketing mangoes as well as growing them. This upgrading strategy – doing more chain activities – takes skills and costs money. For women, doing more activities may mean a bigger workload, with implications for

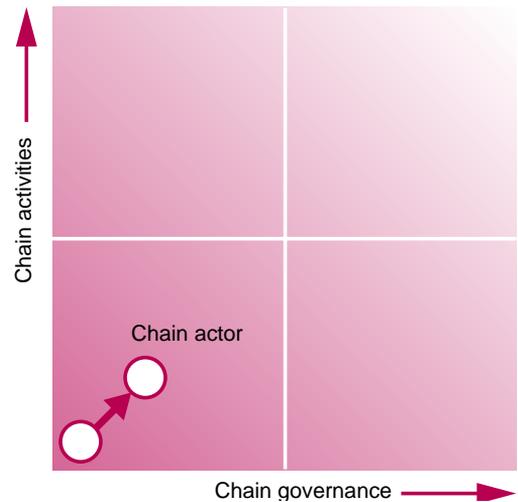


Figure 3.2 Upgrading as a chain actor

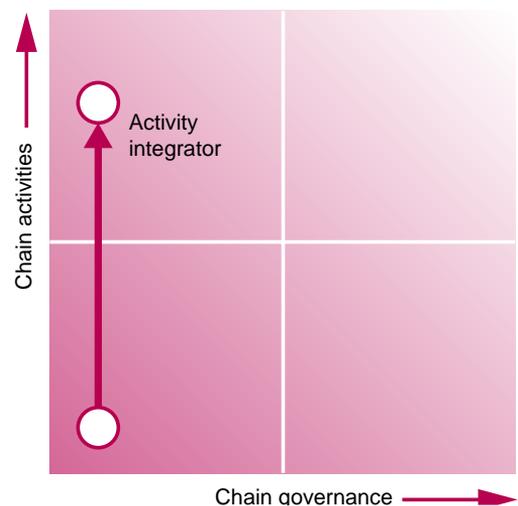


Figure 3.3 Upgrading as an activity integrator

her wellbeing. Perhaps she does not control the extra money she earns. Doing more activities may not help her to negotiate better terms within the household. Does her work give Juanita a bigger share of, or control over, the household income, or does her husband control the income? Another question mark.

### Upgrading as a chain partner

The third strategy looks at how farmers can become chain partners. Juanita built up relationships with her buyers so she could understand their needs and find a niche in the market. But she was working at a small-scale and for a local market. Often, people become chain partners by forming a cooperative or producer organization, and here we see similar gendered constraints. While such organizations may permit women to join, or even become board members, they cannot necessarily influence the decisions made. It is not enough to create space for women by letting them take on certain positions; individual women's skills and sense of self-determination need to be developed. Will the local mango producer organization allow Juanita to join? Does she have the skills to be a board member and decision-maker?

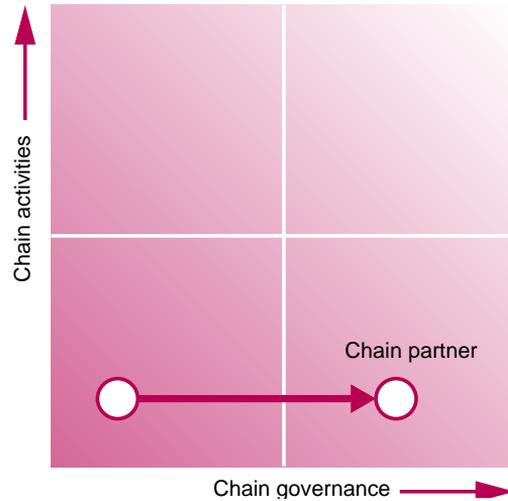


Figure 3.4 Upgrading as a chain partner

### Upgrading as co-owner

This strategy entails both increasing activities and building direct linkages with buyers, so becoming the (co-) owner of the value chain. Juanita does have direct links to her buyers, but she is operating at too small a scale to have a meaningful influence over the governance of the chain. The chain empowerment matrix does not illustrate the constraints women face in trying to become co-owners of the chain enterprise. These constraints are related to women's capabilities: their literacy, skills and ability to negotiate. Can Juanita read and write? Can she

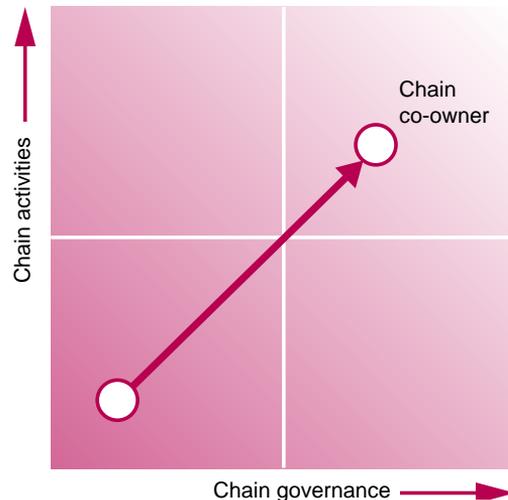


Figure 3.5 Upgrading as a co-owner

inform herself about the potential for her enterprise? Can she negotiate her own participation? Constraints may also be structural (e.g. cultural norms, laws and regulations), limiting women's opportunities: Will Juanita's husband resist her joining a cooperative or forming a company to process and sell mangoes?

In reconsidering the chain empowerment matrix for the purposes of this book we focus in the upper-right quadrant on co-ownership in terms of control (over income, decision-making, etc.) and on self-determination. We use the question "who decides what is empowerment?" (e.g., as posed by Kabeer) as an entry point for considering empowerment and gender issues in the value chains.

### ***Points for inclusion derived from the gender critique***

The preceding paragraphs illustrate some ways we need to build on the chain empowerment matrix to make it gender sensitive. We need to bring a gender perspective and the value chain empowerment framework together. The following paragraphs review five biases and blind spots:

- Constraints to empowerment through upgrading
- Diversity: who are we talking about?
- The outcomes of each strategy
- Changes occurring outside of the chain at the household and community levels
- A broader and more nuanced understanding of empowerment.

**Constraints to empowerment through upgrading.** The matrix shows what kinds of positions the actors attain. But it says nothing about the obstacles in their way. What constraints do farmers face in trying to improve their positions? How do they overcome them? Because the matrix does not make the constraints explicit, it cannot differentiate between those faced by women as compared to men, the different constraints faced by one group of women as compared to another, or between men of different social standing. The matrix captures the "what" very well: what is a farmer doing in the chain. This is its strength. But the "why" and "how" are blind spots that a revamped analytical framework needs to take up. Why are farmers positioned in a particular quadrant? Why are they successful in improving their position (or why not)? How do they improve their positions?

**Diversity.** We get a sense of the "who" from the matrix as it looks at the big picture through two questions: "Who does what in the chain?" and "Who determines how things are done?" (KIT et al. 2006). But we do not get a sense of the individuals involved: which farmers are upgrading? Are the farmers who successfully upgrade men or women? Are they old or young? Are they from a particular ethnic group or class? Farmers are very diverse: they may be smallholders or large plantation owners; successful entrepreneurs supplying international markets or growing food to feed their family, selling any extra on the local market; active in local politics and cooperative leadership, or independent and uninformed or without sway in local decisions. Farmers are not only rural entrepreneurs; they have also other identities and play multiple roles. For example, farmers are also

citizens, consumers, church- and mosque-goers, kin and community members (Westen 2002). This diversity is important to consider as we move towards a gender and empowerment framework.

**Outcomes.** Without information on the outcomes of the strategies associated with each quadrant of the chain empowerment matrix, we are at a loss. We simply do not know whether the outcomes are different for women than for men, or how the outcomes vary for different categories of farmers. What happens when women do more chain activities? Do they enjoy more recognition and respect for their contributions? Does their income increase? Or do they simply have more work to do and less time to meet household and community obligations? Because we cannot see the outcome of the strategy, the matrix does not help us to design interventions, including those that are potentially gender-equal or pro-poor.

**Changes beyond the chain: household and institutional levels.** Furthermore, the framework looks at the value chain in isolation without considering the context. What happens to the income distribution and workload within the household as a (female or male) actor upgrades their position? Do women have a voice beyond the chain (in the household, in the community), and if they have a voice, do they make use of it? What choices and alternatives do women have regarding chain activities and management? How are these choices determined? What contextual factors support or constrain their choices. And how are women and men's perspectives and needs linked to their achievements in the chain? When do women and men actually feel empowered?

**Empowerment.** The chain empowerment matrix looks at farmer empowerment in terms of activities and governance within the value chain. But we can enrich our understanding of empowerment through exploring what others have to say about it, especially from a gender perspective. Kabeer (2001), for example, distinguishes three levels of empowerment, moving from **deeper** (structural relations of class, ethnicity, gender), to **intermediate** (institutional rules and resources) and **immediate** (individual resources, agency and achievements). "Resources" enhance a person's ability to make choices and shape his or her life. They include (access to) material, human and social resources, and can be both actual and future claims. "Agency" is the "ability to define one's goals and act upon them" (Kabeer 1999).

The "immediate" level of empowerment, and its underlying concepts, are helpful for understanding the gender dynamics within a value chain. Resources and agency combined constitute what Amartya Sen (2009) calls "capabilities"; that is to say, the potential that people have for living the lives they want, and of achieving their valued ways of being and doing.

What we miss in the chain empowerment matrix is an analytical tool for **understanding** the capabilities - resources and agency - that make the change possible. And we have no insight into the impact in terms of "intermediate" and "deeper" empowerment. We explore the concepts for engendering chain empowerment further as we turn to the gender literature in the next section.

### 3.3 Basic concepts for engendering chain empowerment

We are hardly the first to think about women and men's roles in development. This section reviews the history of this field and the shift from "women in development" to "gender and development" and beyond (Razavi and Miller 1995). The development of this field has been contested and political.<sup>1</sup> But for the purposes of this book, we review each approach in turn in order to contextualize the key concepts used in our analytical framework.

Thinking on women and men's roles in development has evolved and become much more sophisticated and nuanced over time. Early entries into this field in 1950 to 1970 embraced a **welfare approach**, which concentrated on and acknowledged only women's "reproductive" roles (see Chapter 1). It failed to recognize their critical "productive" and "community" contributions, even though all three roles compete for women's time and all must be considered when we aim to design interventions that benefit women. Women must balance competing demands on their reproductive, productive and community responsibilities. Understanding this "triple role" of women is an important conceptual anchor for addressing gender.

1 For more on the political nature of the evolving discourse around women and men's roles in development see Mayoux (2011).



### Box 3.1. Practical vs. strategic gender needs

**Practical gender needs** refer to basic welfare: healthcare, the opportunity to earn an income to provide for the household, the provision of housing and basic services, and the distribution of food. Practical needs are immediate and critical to survival. Practical needs are typically related to inadequacies in living conditions; they focus on meeting basic needs without tackling the challenge of changing women's positions.

**Strategic gender needs** are longer term and are linked to institutional change. Interventions that address strategic needs challenge the existing gender division of labour, and work to alleviate the burden of domestic labour as well as taking measures against male violence (March et al. 1999). In identifying and addressing strategic needs, the aim is to transform existing relationships of unequal power between men and women and explicitly change the position of women through the intervention.

Some argue (c.f. Sara Longwe in March et al. 1999) that strategic and practical needs go hand-in-hand, and that both need to be considered in a given intervention. We agree in considering the cases that are at the heart of this book. The cases show that through participation in a value chain, both strategic and practical needs can be addressed. However, this does not mean that both strategic and practical needs are always met. Molyneux (1998) conceptualizes practical and strategic needs as a continuum rather than dichotomized concepts, and she makes the political links between the two. The message is clear enough: practical and strategic needs are both important and they are inter-related.

From 1976 to 1985 the **equity approach** gained in popularity. A Washington-based network of female development professionals coined the phrase "Women in Development" (WID) with the purpose of promoting women's equality (Tinker 1990:30 in Razavi and Miller 1995:6). This recognizes women as active participants in development as well as their triple role. The equity approach sought to meet women's strategic gender needs (Box 3.1) through direct state intervention by giving women political and economic autonomy, and by reducing their inequality with men. However, despite the strength of its arguments, this approach was criticized as being rooted in western notions of feminism rather than endogenous aspirations.

During that same period (1970 onward), a less radical approach was also gaining momentum: the **anti-poverty** approach. This took the position that women are disproportionately represented among the poorest people in the world and that poor women should be supported in overcoming poverty by increasing their productivity.

In the 1980s we saw a move into "**efficiency**" thinking: the idea that in order to make development more efficient and effective, women's economic contributions had to be harnessed. Women were seen as a source of under-tapped labour: ignoring women was inefficient. The tools that emerged from this thinking brought in an economic analysis, which made gender relevant to policy-making (Razavi and Miller 1995:26). But this approach, while aiming to meet women's practical gender needs and recognizing all three roles that women play, too often assumed that women's time was elastic: that they could "do it all". The efficiency argument

### Box 3.2. “Women” versus “gender” vis-à-vis empowerment

“Gender” is not synonymous with “women”. Where women are a category of people, gender is the socially constructed difference between women and men. It is not so much about biological differences, but about how society gives meaning to these differences through ideas about femininity and masculinity, and the power relations and dynamics that come about as a result of this.

Bearing the woman/gender distinction in mind, empowerment can be defined as “a process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire the ability to do so” (Kabeer 1999: 437). People have different needs, interests and preferences, which are reflected in the choices that they make. Empowerment is not about differences in the choices that different people make; it is concerned with **reducing the inequalities in people’s capacity to make choices**. This means that gender differences in choices are not in and of themselves a problem: these differences in preferences must be distinguished from denials of choice.

Empowerment is about changing **gender** relations in order to enhance **women’s** ability to shape their lives. It is a process of change that encompasses both the question of **what** is changing and the question of **how** that change is **valued**.

often wrongly associates women’s participation with increased gender equity and decision-making power for women. These are far from inevitable. The focus left aside some important aspects of gender relations, including consideration of other social cleavages, like class and race (Razavi and Miller 1995:26).

Critics now challenge thinking from the 1970s and 1980s because it conflicts with wider issues of justice and empowerment. Whether they focus on equity, anti-poverty or efficiency, they do not challenge existing gender roles. Resources rather than power dynamics are central. But gender relations are complex and nuanced; there is more at stake than simply economics.

Frameworks have since moved towards **empowerment**, emphasizing the transformation of gender relations through women’s own empowerment. Central to this is the idea that empowerment cannot be granted by someone else, but must be self-generated: self-determination and agency are key. The role of outside players is still important, but all policy can do is to provide the conditions that enable women to take greater control over their lives. Women themselves need to make the change and take that control (Kabeer in March et al. 1999: 250). This empowerment approach emerged around 1990 and was articulated by women from the “global South”. The idea is to empower women by supporting their own initiatives, thus fostering self-reliance. Power is central to this approach: women need to shift power dynamics in their own favour, or at least away from their detriment.

So, how is Kabeer’s notion of empowerment related to the “chain empowerment” framework we described in Chapter 3.1? While chain empowerment focuses on achievements, Kabeer’s notion allows two extra viewpoints to surface, at two moments: one before the achievement (namely, the **capacity** to achieve) and the

### Box 3.3. Gender intervention terminology

#### Gender-blind versus gender-aware

An intervention is **gender-blind** if we cannot see who is doing what and lack information on women and men's roles. By contrast a **gender-aware** intervention is conscious of these different roles, so the room for manoeuvre for shifting the status quo becomes clear.

#### Gender-neutral interventions

These work within the existing gender division of resources and responsibilities. For example, in Chapter 4 ("Mitigating resistance"), we see gender-neutral approaches that work within existing gender norms and divisions of labour and resources.

#### Gender-specific interventions

These use the knowledge of gender differences in a given context to respond to the practical needs of women or men. But they still work within the existing gender division of resources and responsibilities. For example, in Chapter 4.1, the knowledge of women's roles in shea nut collection is an entry point for working with women and improving their incomes and fulfilling their needs. In Chapter 6 on "Organizing for change" we see capacity development and sensitization of men as strategies to address practical gender needs.

#### Gender-redistributive interventions

These transform existing distributions of power and resources to create a more balanced relationship between women and men, touching on strategic gender interests (March et al. 1999: 20–1). Chapter 5.2 ("Female entrepreneurship"), Chapter 7 ("Standards, labelling and certification") and Chapter 8 ("Gender-responsible business") move towards more transformational strategies that address strategic gender interests like decision-making power, ownership, representation and so on in addition to practical gender needs.

other after the achievement (the **value** placed on the achievement). To analyse a value chain in terms of women's empowerment, we need insights into the gender dynamics at play. This demands a longer time span and looks beyond the achievement itself.

Each of the approaches to women/gender and development we have described above arose in a particular time period. But the rationales and arguments associated with each approach have not disappeared. The cases in this book reflect different rationales, often grounded in one or more of the approaches described in this chapter.

It is interesting to refer back to the arguments presented in Chapter 2 to consider the roots of the business and social justice cases for addressing gender in value chains. Today we see a focus on rights, which asserts that addressing power, equality and participation are rights (the first two sets of arguments in Chapter 2).<sup>1</sup> No further explanation or rationale is required: when rights are unequal this is motivation enough to change practices.

1 For more on a rights-based approach see the work of Mukhopadhyay, Hunter and Milward at [www.genderandrights.dk](http://www.genderandrights.dk)

The third set of arguments in Chapter 2 focuses on economic reasons for engaging women more fully in development. Two frameworks that emerged from the early WID era have much to offer here: the Harvard (or gender analysis) framework,<sup>1</sup> and the POP (people-oriented planning) framework, which was based on the Harvard approach<sup>2</sup> (Razavi and Miller 1995:16). Both focus on the economic argument that involving women results in the most efficient allocation of resources. This is a useful and compelling argument if you are talking to people whose predominant influence is that of mainstream economic thought. These frameworks make women's work visible and help the practitioner avoid making serious technical blunders such as handing out resources at inappropriate times, or underestimating women's workload. They are non-threatening and gender-neutral (Box 3.3).

Despite their widespread use, these gender frameworks also have limitations. They lack an analysis of power, diversity is not taken into account, and they focus only on productive labour and achievements rather than also looking at the institutional constraints to women's re-positioning. Some of the same critiques emerged in our own review of chain empowerment. It is important to bear them in mind as we construct a framework for chain empowerment that integrates gender.

### ***Bringing in two new dimensions: Structure and agency***

*Aicha is a good sesame farmer – she understands the crop and produces a high-quality product. When her husband died she was left to tend the fields and support her children and aging father-in-law through the money she earned from selling sesame. She is ambitious and motivated, and wants to increase her production by using better, more modern equipment. She has seen her male neighbours buy new tools recently, using loans from the local bank. They have had very positive results: the tools save time and result in a better harvest of higher-quality sesame. But after trekking to the nearest town, Aicha returns disappointed. Because she does not own the land where she grows the sesame, the bank has denied her a loan that her male neighbours were able to get easily. Women are not traditionally the land-owners in this part of the country, and in fact, national law does not permit women to own land, even if they have the money to buy it and even if they are widows or the next of kin of a land-owner. Aicha is left with no option but to continue producing sesame the old way.*

Aicha's story is not uncommon. Despite her determination, motivation and capacity to produce high-quality sesame, she is stopped in her tracks from "upgrading" because laws and customs do not allow her to own land and get credit. Her story illustrates two important concepts for understanding why women can (or cannot) improve their positions within a value chain.

1 More on the Harvard framework: [www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/mdtmanila/training/unit1/harvordfw.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/mdtmanila/training/unit1/harvordfw.htm)

2 Other frameworks include Caroline Moser's *Gender planning framework*, Naila Kabeer's *Social relations framework* and the *Women's empowerment framework*

The first concept is **agency**. This refers to the capacity of an individual woman to act independently and to make her own free choices (e.g., Kabeer 1999). In a value chain, agency refers to an individual woman's capacities that allow her to choose to do more activities in the chain and to act in more leadership or decision-making roles. Agency is also about the capacity and freedom to value achievements and to set one's own "empowerment goals". We see that Aicha is a determined and capable sesame farmer. She has learned what she needs to do to improve her production, and is ready to improve her position in the chain. We can say that she has agency – she is capable of acting independently and making choices.

But Aicha has met with a wall – a lack of access to credit – because she is not allowed to own land. Aicha is constrained by law and tradition. These are institutional or structural constraints. **Structure** refers to the rules, customs, habits and traditions which can either constrain or enable women from doing more activities in the chain or acting in leadership or decision-making roles. We refer to the set of structures – the rules, norms, laws, traditions, etc. – that shape the possibilities open to different actors, as the institutional context. We recognize that the value chain itself is a part of the institutional context and is, indeed, one of the structures that shape the possibilities open to women and men. But in our case analyses in Chapters 4–8, we keep the two ideas separate. We use **structure** to refer to the wider institutional context as it affects gender. We refer to the standards, the organization of producers, and decision-making in the value chain (amongst others) as **value chain governance**.

To design empowerment strategies that lead to gender-equal outcomes – that allow men and women to benefit equally – we need to add the dimensions of agency and structure to the chain empowerment framework. These new dimensions will help us understand the processes that make it possible for farmers to be in different positions in the matrix, and the constraints they face in trying to upgrade. And they will allow us to design interventions that address these constraints.

The proposed additional dimensions – structure and agency (Box 3.4) – come from the sociology and gender studies literature (c.f. Giddens 1984, Kabeer 1999). In sociology there is much historical debate on structure versus agency; that is to say the primacy of individual free choice versus societal arrangements that limit and create opportunities.

But these two concepts are interrelated when it comes to how change happens and what makes change possible. Focusing only on agency assumes, for example, that if business and financial services are available, then both women and men can freely choose to use them without facing constraints posed by family, community, class, caste, or other status. Focusing on structure alone assumes, for example, that laws that are "on-the-books" are implemented, which is not always the case; and that equal opportunities will always lead to equal outcomes. By looking at the interaction between structure and agency, we can begin to understand the impact of structures (formal and informal institutions) on individual behaviour and vice versa; both specific to a certain context, time and sometimes specific value chain. That is to say, agency shapes, and is in turn shaped by, formal and infor-

### Box 3.4. Definitions of agency and structure

**Agency** is the capacity of an agent (an individual person or other entity) to act independently, to make their own free choices, and to impose those choices on the world. These agents engage with social structures.

Agency refers to capabilities, self-determination, the capacity to make choices, skill development and so on.

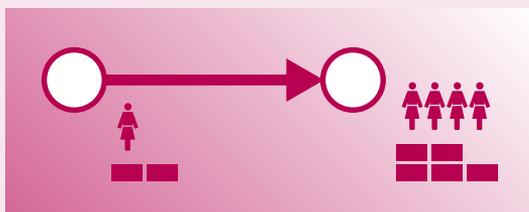
In this book we use a small figure of a woman to represent agency.

**Structure** refers to institutions that either limit or create the opportunities available to individuals. Institutions can be both formal and informal. Informal institutions include social class, values, religion, customs, and ways of doing things (habits); while formal institutions refer to laws and regulations. Furthermore, structures can refer to different levels (local, national, regional, international) and to different domains (economic, political, social and cultural).

Structure thus refers to open opportunities for women, supported by changes in rules, regulations, producer organization statutes, values, norms, traditions, habits.

In this book we use a small brick or building block to represent structure.

We use several figures or bricks to show changes in agency and structure, as in Figure 3.6.



Agency (women's capabilities)



Structure (women's opportunities)

*Figure 3.6. Example of an increase in Agency and Structure*

mal rules and institutions, which accounts for a certain positioning in the value chain and the outcomes of value chain interventions. Gender relations are shaped by individual behaviour as well as social institutions (Laven and Verhart 2010).

Structure and agency are thus more than just additional dimensions to add to the chain empowerment matrix: they provide an explanation for changes in value chain activities and chain governance (the other two dimensions). Without the analytical room for manoeuvre granted by bringing in structure and agency we would see neither the constraints nor the opportunities facing women in the value chain to bring about changes in the lives of these women and the chains in which they participate. The very origins of opportunities and constraints lie in agency and in societal structures. According to Kabeer (1999) structure and agency have catalytic potential: this means that changes in one affect the other, and that when both are positively changed, the impact is much more profound than what is possible through improvements in either one alone.

### Box 3.5. Condition and position

Condition and position are an enlightening conceptual duo. **Condition** describes the immediate, material circumstance in which men and women live, related to their present workloads and responsibilities. Providing clean water or stoves for cooking, for example, may improve the condition of women by reducing their workload.

**Position** describes the place of women in society relative to that of men. Changing women's position requires addressing their strategic gender interests, including equal access to decision-making and resources, getting rid of discrimination in employment, land ownership, and so on. In order to change women's position, we must address the way gender determines power, status and control over resources (adapted from March et al, 1999: 19).

Condition and position, while not explicit in our analytical framework, will re-surface as important analytical signposts in Chapters 4–8.

The concepts of structure and agency help to shed light on why it is possible (or not) to improve one's position within a chain in terms of value chain governance and activities. We want to understand these value chain-related changes, but that is just a first step. We also want to put that change into context: to know where the change took place and what triggered it. For example, was a new law (a structural change) the trigger for individual behavioural change? Or did building women's capacity through participation in extension activities (a change in agency) lead men to start involving women more in decision-making within the household (a structural change)? To fully understand how empowerment (for both male and female farmers) takes place, we need to look at the context of this change. For this we bring in another important set of concepts from the gender literature: condition and position (Box 3.5).

Taking the concepts and perspectives described above into account, we now turn to the nuts and bolts of the analytical framework for this book.



## 3.4 Making gender intrinsic to chain empowerment

*“We cannot add gender or women to frameworks that have led to exclusion of women in the first place, and to the marginalization of the majority of poor people.”<sup>1</sup>*

While this book takes an entry point of value chain development for addressing gender issues, we recognize that focusing on just the value chain poses a risk: a value chain alone can be too narrow an approach for addressing gender equity if the context is not examined simultaneously (Verhart and Pyburn 2010). Context is critical for understanding and addressing issues of gender equality. More profoundly, the transformative power of value chains can also be questioned. That is to say, are value chains the most effective way to address gender issues within a particular context? These two queries illustrate the tension between the very different starting points of gender and development versus value chain development. We acknowledge this tension and the potential limits of value chains in terms of “transformative power” (see Box 3.3 for more on gender redistributive interventions): value chains are structures that work within an existing economic paradigm. Often a gender and development approach would aim to shake up or challenge the existing economic paradigm rather than work within it. However, we look at what is possible within the limits of value chain development and believe that the potential for addressing gender within those initiatives remains.

That said, we cannot simply add gender or women to the chain empowerment framework if we hope to really embrace the concepts, thinking and transformative potential that a gender approach unleashes. We need instead to re-think how we have been analysing situations and intervening in value chains from another standpoint. We need a new pair of glasses. This entails redefining empowerment; it requires challenging ourselves to re-examine how we are engaging and look at a given situation through a different window. Chapter 3.3 aimed to provide the concepts necessary for this re-positioning; this subchapter knits together the threads of gender equity and value chains.

Building on the foundation of the original chain empowerment matrix, we analyse value chain interventions that strive to improve positions of women. We aim to achieve two additional objectives:

- To support the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of value chain interventions that contribute to gender equality in a given context
- To understand how gender equality contributes to pro-poor and economically efficient value chain development.

Both of these objectives are important: improving the value chain **and** making value chains work for both women and men.

1 DAWN 2000 in Arnfred 2004: 83

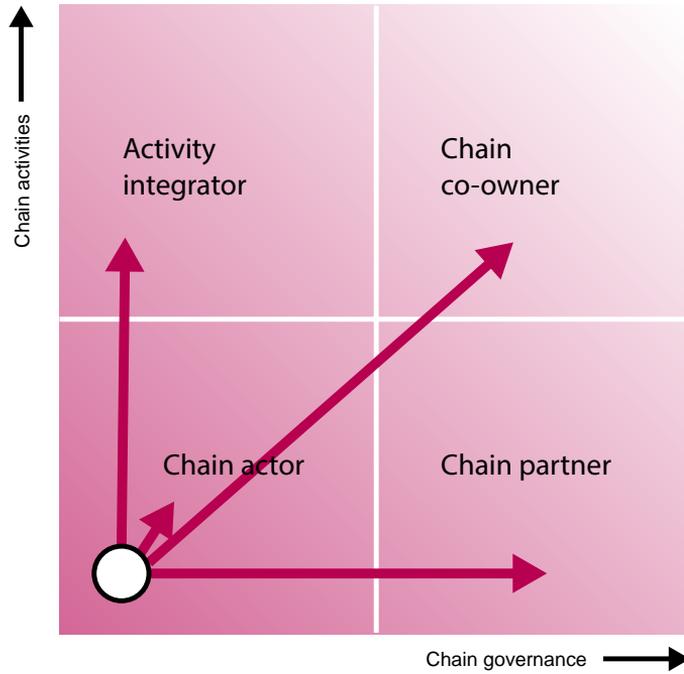


Figure 3.7. Possible ways of upgrading in the chain empowerment framework

A first attempt to bring together gender-based empowerment and value chain thinking by the Agri-ProFocus working group (Laven et al. 2009) resulted in a four dimensional perspective on empowerment in value chains that covered both the vertical integration (activities) and horizontal integration (governance) dimensions of the chain empowerment matrix, as well as bringing in gender dynamics at household and community levels, and the institutional context. But one question remained unsolved: how do we make this growing sense of contextual factors usable in practice and in analysing a given value chain?

We saw earlier in this chapter that the original chain empowerment matrix illustrates four upgrading strategies (Figure 3.7).

Reflecting on what this matrix might mean for a female farmer, demonstrated that these strategies do not automatically benefit women. Additional questions were posed to understand the different constraints and opportunities that female farmers face, and to understand female farmers’ capabilities. Because we want to be able to show how upgrading works differently for women than for men, we begin by engendering the original chain empowerment framework, recognizing that women tend to lag behind men in terms of:

- Being visible and recognized as chain actors and in this role adding value to agricultural products
- Possessing the capabilities to perform well and to take economic decisions in the value chain
- Being confident to take up new activities and to take up leadership roles
- Having a supportive environment in which women can add value and control that added value.

Therefore, in assessing the outcomes of upgrading, a gender lens compels the following changes to the upgrading strategies mentioned earlier in relation to the chain empowerment matrix:

- **Upgrading as a chain actor.** This is not only about a farmer doing what she does better, but also about her being seen as a fully-fledged chain actor: it is about recognition of women's economic contributions to the value chain.
- **Upgrading as activity integrator.** This is not only about a farmer entering into activities further up the chain, but also about women making the choice to take up these activities themselves in light of their other responsibilities (e.g., reproductive, household). Women gain the skills required to participate fully in the value chain: they are capable and confident to do so.
- **Upgrading by developing chain partnerships.** This is not only about farmers building long-term alliances with buyers, but also about female farmers being recognized partners. Moreover, it is about removing constraints for female farmers to participate in decision-making: rules, regulations and policies become gender-sensitive.
- **Upgrading by developing ownership over the chain.** This is not only about farmers becoming owners of chain enterprises, but also about female farmers having the capacity and support to take up leadership roles. Rules, regulations and policies support women's leadership.

Having made this first step in engendering the matrix, we now bring in the concepts of structure and agency as a second step towards developing a more comprehensive analytical framework. By reconsidering a female farmer's chain activities and her ability to make decisions within the chain (chain governance) vis-à-vis her agency and the institutional context in which she is living (structure), we start to understand how changes take place that benefit both the chain, as well as women in the chain. Figure 3.8 presents a new, engendered chain empowerment matrix that considers these two additional dimensions to the framework as defined below.

### **Interpretation of interactions across the four dimensions**

The final piece of our analytical framework is an interpretation of the relationship between the four dimensions of the engendered empowerment framework. For example, we look at how a training workshop on quality (which improves farmer **agency**) changes first how a woman farmer performs her a (which improves how she engages as a chain **actor** and how she functions in her chain **activities**), and in time, also changes how men in the community recognize and appreciate her contributions (which is a **structural** change). We want to capture on the one hand insights into how changes take place (the **order**), but also the **value** placed on those changes – that is to say, how the change is appreciated. This allows us to ask questions as to whether upgrading is actually an empowerment process for the women (and men) involved.

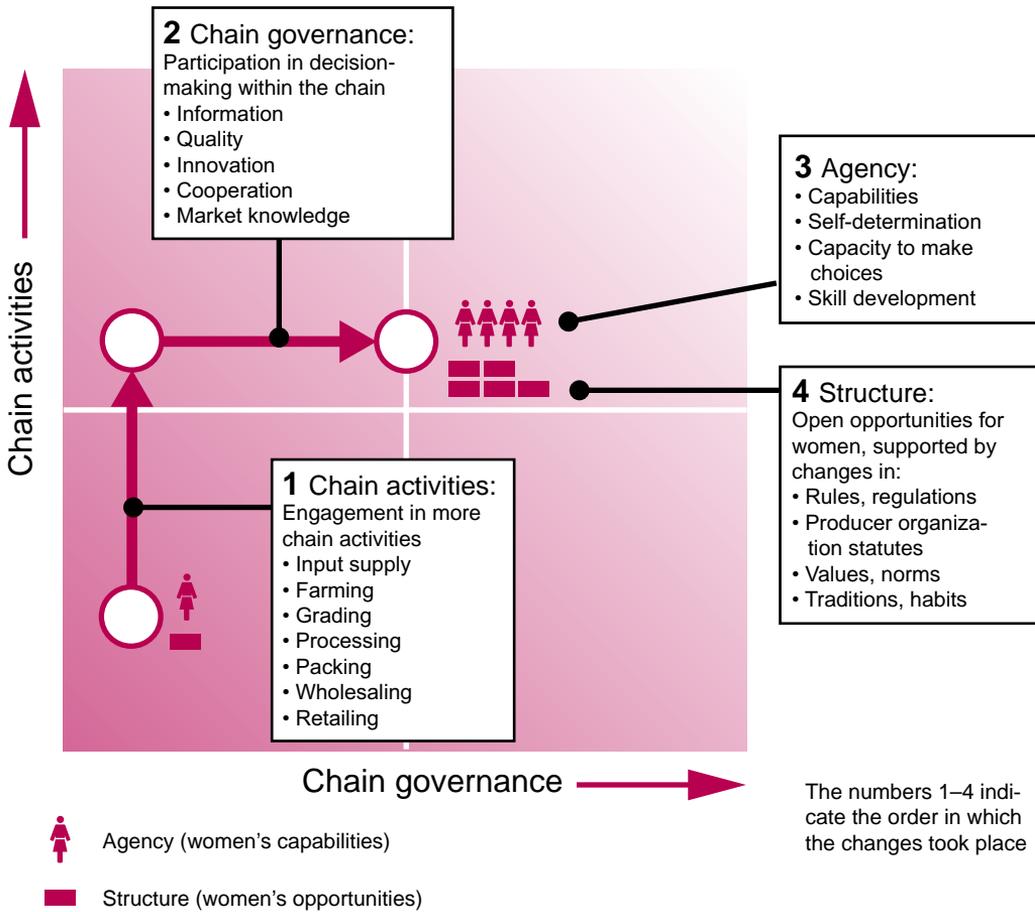


Figure 3.8. Engendered chain empowerment matrix

### 3.5 Analysing the cases in this book

For each of the 25 cases in Chapters 4–8, we include a case analysis that incorporates these three steps. In order to do this, during the writeshop, participants analysed their own cases. Each case-holder was invited to score his or her case on a scale of 1 to 10 along four dimensions: chain activities, chain governance, structure and agency. They did this for two points in time: at the start of the project, and the present day. The case-holders also provided evidence on the changes that had taken place and how those happened, and were asked to explain their scores. They were also asked to note the order of the changes to clarify what happened when.

The scoring process allows us to explore how a change is valued by the case-holder. As such we bring out not only the change (the “achievement” in Kabeer’s language), but also the **value** placed on the changes that occur.

Without question the scores are subjective. However, in an effort to align and calibrate the scores, all case-holders from each section in the book reviewed and

questioned the scoring of the others in that section. This allowed a peer review and validation of the scoring and made it less arbitrary. In the “Analysing the change” sections at the end of each case description, we describe the changes that occurred in the case, based on this scoring and ordering exercise. Each of these sections contains a diagram to explain it.

### ***Analysing the change***

Each figure contains evidence to support the case-holder’s statement of change for each of the four dimensions. We asked case-holders to back up their claims of success in integrating gender in their value chain initiatives so that we could see what happened and consider how and why they were successful (or not).

In the “Analysing the change” part of each case in the book, we aim to reflect on two elements.

- First, a sense of the **order** in which the changes took place – shown by the numbers 1–4 in the accompanying figure. Of course we recognize that change, especially in complex domains, rarely happens in a linear and orderly fashion, and that cause–effect relationships can be difficult to unravel or may be too simplistic where multiple factors are at play, including some unknowns. That said, we do feel that asking case-holders to consider the order and magnitude of the changes that occurred and why, does provide insight.
- Second, the interpretation covers the **importance or value** placed on the order in which changes took place.

With this analytical framework and the guiding concepts from the gender studies literature as a basis, we now turn to the strategies that are being used in practice to improve gender equity and involve women more constructively in value chain development. Commonalities will emerge amongst the cases within a particular strategy in terms of the kinds of changes seen, how they are valued and the order in which changes occur. But we will come back to that in the conclusions to the book.



# 4

## Mitigating resistance by building on tradition



*Main contributors: Anna Laven, Rozemarijn Apotheker, Juan Pablo Solis, Ward Tanghe, Elvis Tangem Paul Nfor, Julius Lemalasia, Meera Sundararajan, Ravikumar Nadarajah, Kohinoor Akhter, Intan Darmawati Supeno and Rony Aguilar*

This section explores one entry point for addressing gender within value chains: by building on what women already do and the crop and other products they already produce. This means taking traditional gender roles as a starting point (Box 4.1).

### **Box 4.1. Gender roles**

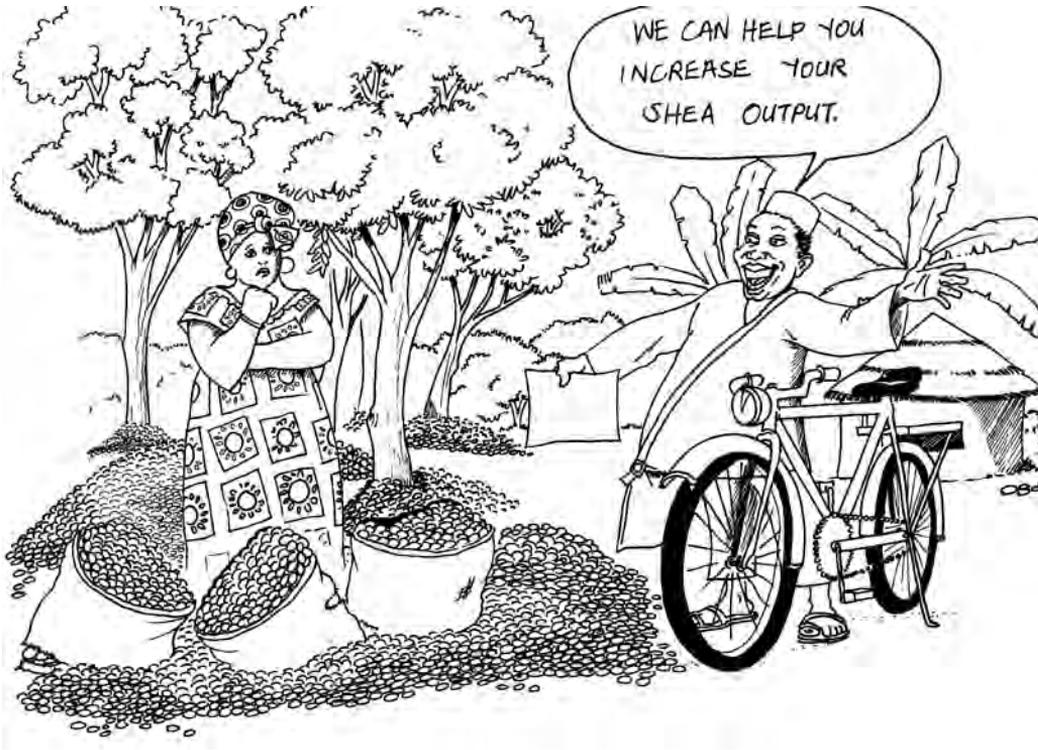
Gender roles are the social and behavioural norms considered socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex in a specific culture. They differ widely between cultures and over time (WHO 2009).

Tradition affects the roles that men and women play. In Africa, it is often said that women traditionally do most of the farm work. But if a new kind of plough is introduced, men often take over the ploughing. Generalizations are always tricky and farming systems differ from place to place, but it is safe to say that women do most of the subsistence farming while men focus more on cash crops. Subsistence farming is often seen as an informal, “reproductive” task: feeding the family is the goal. In contrast, managing cash crops is seen more as a formal, “productive” task: the crops are sold, so generate income. In other words, gender roles influence the division of labour between men and women in a given setting.

Economists tend to disregard reproductive tasks that do not bring in money. Since it is women who do most of this work, their contribution to agricultural value chains is invisible, and never appears in official statistics (Momsen 1995).

### **Low-hanging fruit**

For development organizations or businesses it is relatively easy to target women by starting with traditionally female tasks and activities. We can think of these typically “female” chains, crops and roles as “low-hanging fruit”: they are relatively



easy to use when in engaging with women in value chains. Working with women in such areas is unlikely to trigger resistance from men in the community or from local businesses because women are merely continuing in their traditional roles. Women also find it easy to expand their work in these areas for the same reason.

Some interventions end there: for example they enable women to earn more by producing crops – and at the same time raise women’s visibility and increase the value of their traditional work. Other interventions try to use a “female” crop or chain as an entry point for a more transformative change.

### **Dealing with resistance**

But what makes people resist changes in gender roles? Resistance is rooted in power relations, and the fear that by giving some women more power, others (both men and women) will lose out (Box 4.2).

In traditional societies, many constraints hinder women from making choices. For example, they may lack access to land, money, services and other resources, so are cut off from most

#### **Box 4.2. Power = the ability to make choices**

One way of thinking about power is in terms of the ability to make choices.

- To be disempowered means being denied choice.
- If someone is empowered, he or she changes from having no (or few) choices to being able to choose among various alternatives (Kabeer 1999).

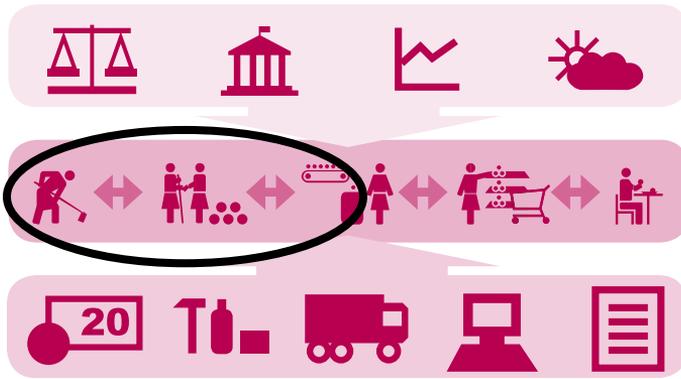


Figure 4.1. Mitigating resistance works early in the value chain

business activities. They may lack the power to make decisions. Many are illiterate, and are not permitted to trade or to travel away from home. They tend not to be seen as breadwinners. For women to benefit more from traditional activities, both cultural and non-cultural constraints have to be overcome.

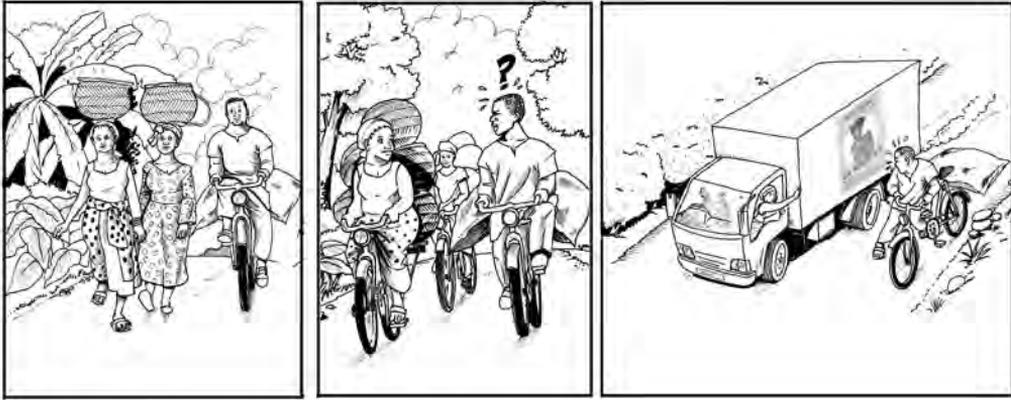
The cases in this section show how some of these constraints can be removed gently and slowly. They focus on primary production, marketing and processing: all towards the left end of the value chain (Figure 4.1). Many of the cases depict situations after a conflict or disaster: without their husbands, women had to become breadwinners even though they had few skills or resources. In such situations traditionally female chains, crops and roles can help women to rebuild their livelihoods.

This chapter is divided into four subchapters. The first three focus on a particular type of chain, while the fourth looks at organic agriculture.

**Chapter 4.1: Shea: Professionalizing informal female chains.** This subchapter presents cases from Ghana, Guinea, Burkina Faso and Uganda. The cases from Ghana and Guinea show how women can benefit more from collecting and processing shea nuts by formalizing their activities in the chain. The example from Burkina points out some of the risks and shows that shea does not automatically create benefits for women. The example from Uganda shows how shea can benefit particularly vulnerable women – refugees who are trying to rebuild their livelihoods in a camp.

**Chapter 4.2: Livestock: From traditional responsibilities to new opportunities.** This subchapter examines another type of value chain: livestock. The first case from Kenya is about women's roles in taking care of larger livestock and trading cattle on the market. The second case is about trading smaller animals, poultry. Both cases address a serious constraint for women: their lack of mobility, which makes it hard for them to trade animals outside their villages. By bringing markets closer to women and by building their capacity, new economic opportunities emerge.

**Chapter 4.3: Dairying: Transforming systems through new roles for women.** The third subchapter turns to livestock products and veterinary services. It shows



how the roles of women have changed. In northern Sri Lanka, an area recovering from civil war, women have strengthened their position or taken up activities further along the value chain. In Bangladesh, women have been trained as livestock health workers. This chapter also presents two brief examples from India, where women have used collective action to improve their dairy business.

**Chapter 4.4: Improving women’s participation through green agriculture.**

The last chapter in this section also takes traditional female tasks as a starting point, but reframes the female role of caretaker in new fields: business and the environment. It presents cases on rice farming in Java, Indonesia, and organic vegetables in Guatemala. It also includes one brief experience with green agriculture in Armenia.

## 4.1 Shea: Professionalizing informal female chains

Shea butter is a yellowish natural fat extracted from the nut of a wild tree that grows in fields and forests in Africa. The shea tree can grow to be 400 years old and first reaches its full production capacity at 40 years. That makes it difficult to grow in plantations, where faster-growing species are preferred. Good-quality shea butter is widely used in cosmetics, while lower qualities are used as a cooking fat.

Shea is a typically “female” commodity. Traditionally, it is the village women who collect the nuts and process them into shea butter. Urban wholesalers (women or men) buy this butter, bulk it and take it to the city, where women informal traders re-sell divide it into small portions to sell. Collecting nuts and making the butter is traditionally a supplementary activity for women that generates little income. In many cases most of the nuts remain on the ground uncollected.

Despite this, collecting and processing nuts, and trading the butter, offer an economic opportunity for women. Women already do most of the collection and processing; the barriers to entry are low (e.g., women do not need to own the land where they collect nuts), and the commercial potential is high. This has encouraged dozens of projects to focus on professionalizing this female chain and to develop these informal activities into real businesses.

In some countries the shea sector has become more formal. In Ghana, for example, the value chain looks different. Women collect the nuts but sell them to middlemen – often small traders – who deliver the nuts to warehouses owned by large multinationals. There the nuts are processed for export to Europe. In these kinds of chains, the challenge is to find ways that women can benefit more from the activities they are involved in (Box 4.3).

This chapter presents two cases that illustrate how professionalizing informal activities where rural women are traditionally involved can benefit not only women, but also their communities and the functioning of the value chain as a whole.

- **Case 4.1, Shea butter in Guinea**, shows how an informal chain can be built upon. Although setting up a higher-quality shea chain is a new initiative, it has achieved surprising success in a short time. The women’s groups have already taken ownership of many steps in the value chain, including collection, processing and trading.
- **Case 4.2, Shea nuts in Ghana**, describes an older initiative that builds upon an already quite robust shea chain in the country. Rather than a focus on shea butter (as in Guinea), the women in Ghana have formalized the collection of nuts to empower themselves.

In addition to these two main cases, the boxes in this chapter offer other examples of promoting shea in Africa.

### Box 4.3. Professionalizing informal activities traditionally done by women

**Entry point.** Professionalizing informal activities in which rural women are traditionally involved, taking the shea chain as example.

**Why do it?** Traditionally “female” sectors provide excellent entry points for promoting and empowering women. Tapping into the economic potential of such activities allows the smooth, cost-effective and wide-scale emancipation of women with a low risk of community opposition or takeover by men.

**How to do it?** We distinguish three types of interventions to support women involved in shea. These often go hand-in-hand and reinforce each other:

- A solid capacity-building programme, as women in traditional activities often have low levels of education.
- Strengthening the organizational capacity of women’s groups.
- Developing entrepreneurial skills and strong leadership amongst women.

**When is it a good strategy?** The strategy is particularly suitable:

- In traditional (conservative) environments: women face less opposition when engaging in typically female economic activities.
- In vulnerable societies (e.g., after a conflict) where women want to rebuild their livelihoods but lack access to assets.

#### Conditions for success

The cases show that success is more likely when

- Women own both their organization and equipment
- Men are being sensitized
- External interference is minimal. This to avoid dependency.

- **Box 4.4, Assessing 10 years of shea chain support in Burkina Faso**, offers a caution: it describes how a handful of women groups have received a lot of subsidies, but have not been able to develop shea into a real business.
- **Box 4.5, Linking refugees with the market in Uganda**, shows how, in the vulnerable setting of a refugee camp, female residents were successfully linked with the shea market. This story shows that shea can be an opportunity for women who lack access to assets to rebuild their livelihoods.

## Case 4.1 New vigour in a shea butter union in Guinea

*Ward Tanghe*

If you visit eastern Guinea in the rainy season, you will meet many women carrying baskets filled with fruits that look like big chestnuts. These are shea nuts, the fruit of a tree that grows in the wild. The women dry and store the nuts, then turn them into butter using a complex, labour-intensive process.

Shea butter production is a typically female activity practised by the large majority of rural women in eastern Guinea. The women are generally landless and very poor; they lack the equipment to increase their output, and there is no incentive to improve its quality. Urban wholesalers that visit the rural markets pay a set price for all the shea they buy, regardless of quality, so women do not bother to improve the techniques they use.

### **Setting up a higher-quality value chain**

Aware of the low quality on the main markets, a large part of Guinean consumers know the virtues of shea and are ready to pay extra for quality. Internationally, high-quality shea butter is a popular raw material in the cosmetic industry. To exploit this commercial potential, the women of URICO (a shea butter union with 756 members, grouped into 27 local groups) decided to create their own value chain. To do this, they set up a commercial unit to link them with those customers who are ready to pay for a high-quality product.

URICO decided to develop two products: a perfumed baby cream called KariBébé for the national market, and a high-quality bulk product for regional buyers (with the aim of expanding to the international market later). For the latter, it put in place a rigorous quality-control system. It buys only shea butter produced by its 27 local groups (rather than by individual members). All the shea has to be double-checked by both the URICO unit manager and a board member before it is accepted. The members profit directly because they receive a price premium of 25% upon delivery.

### **Professional management**

URICO used to be strongly dominated by members living around Dabola, the town in central Guinea where it is headquartered. To assure that all member groups would be represented equally, the union was reorganized in 8 “zones”, each of which would have one seat in the board. Another way of preventing urban members from dominating the union was to employ a professional manager controlled by the board. This manager also brings in the entrepreneurial capacity needed to fully exploit the product’s commercial potential.

Assistance Technique et Coopération (ATC, a Guinean NGO) provided the union with organizational and technical support. The Belgian NGO Trias helped to mobilize funds and develop a marketing concept.

### **A sales success**

In the first 10 months of its existence (January to October 2010), the union sold much more than expected: it exported 4 tons of bulk shea butter to Morocco, a relatively easy market and an ideal first contact with export. In addition, 9,500 pots of KariBébé cream were sold in Guinea. Each of the 27 groups that make up the union sold an average of 220 kg of butter, about 50% more than they used to produce during an entire year. They earned about \$120 extra on their deliveries. Today, URCO is the only Guinean institution capable of delivering large quantities of high-quality shea. It has also started a luxury line of soap.

The initiative is new, so its economic impact is still limited. Individual members currently sell only about 15% of their output to the union via their groups; they sell the rest individually to other buyers. But the potential is huge. If the union can find new buyers and keep guaranteeing the quality and quantity of supplies, shea will be transformed from a typical back-up activity to one of the Dabola region's major economic activities. That will boost the status of women both economically and socially.

To increase their production capacity, five of the local groups used their earnings to apply for credit to buy motorized mills. These mills speed up the backbreaking task of pounding the nuts, and can be used to pound maize and cassava too. This frees up time they can use on their shea activities.

After less than 10 months, the commercialization activities are already financially autonomous. Other unions have applied for membership, and with the advice of Trias and ATC, URCO hopes to sell at least 30 tons of shea butter by the end of 2013.

### **Empowerment of women and community development**

Being part of a well-organized commercial outfit has other benefits: the women have gained esteem in the eyes of men, and one of the female board members was elected president of a local microcredit institution. The member groups are already contributing small amounts to village projects such as repairing roads, maintaining health centres and building mosques. They hope their new economic power will give them more influence in their communities' decision making, and they want to use these contributions as leverage.

### **Risks of others taking over**

So far, the Guinean shea sector is still very informal and the country exports little. Will URCO's commercial success lead to men taking over the chain? On a local level, that is unlikely: shea is seen as a women's product, and Guinea has a strong tradition of individual ownership within the household. To further strengthen

the position of member groups, ATC continues to train them on production techniques and equipment maintenance, while Aguidep, another Guinean NGO, is training them in management, planning and literacy skills. To avoid potential resistance among community members, films were shown in village squares that portray women's contributions to household income. The message was that it is in the interest of the whole community for women to fully exploit their economic capacities.

The shea chain might be taken over by big private companies. But this may happen for any type of artisanal activities with high potential. Diversification and professional management are a first step in preventing such a trend. The existence of an influential national organization in the shea chain would be another. To ensure that shea development policy is driven by the female producers, URCO wants to ally with other shea unions and create a national federation to deal with government and other development partners.

### **Analysing the change**

The events described in this case are only 10 months old. Nevertheless we can discern a number of changes that have taken place.

The change began with professionalizing the value chain, creating a new market outlet and formalizing female activities (**chain governance**). Being organized increased the women's negotiating power in the chain (**agency**). Shea was not a new activity for women, but the training, organization and investments in leadership helped them to improve their products and sell to a more profitable market (**chain activities**). They now produce butter of the right quality, and are confident. While it is still unusual to see women in leadership roles, such positions are now open for women. The success of women in the shea chain has helped to make this more acceptable (**structure**).

The biggest change was in governance: setting up a high-quality chain and professionalizing the management. While improving women's capabilities (agency) was a necessity for upgrading, the change in structure came more as a result. Showing the women's success and benefits to the community both reduced resistance and created a supportive environment. Attitudes towards women changed, and women now enjoy more freedoms.

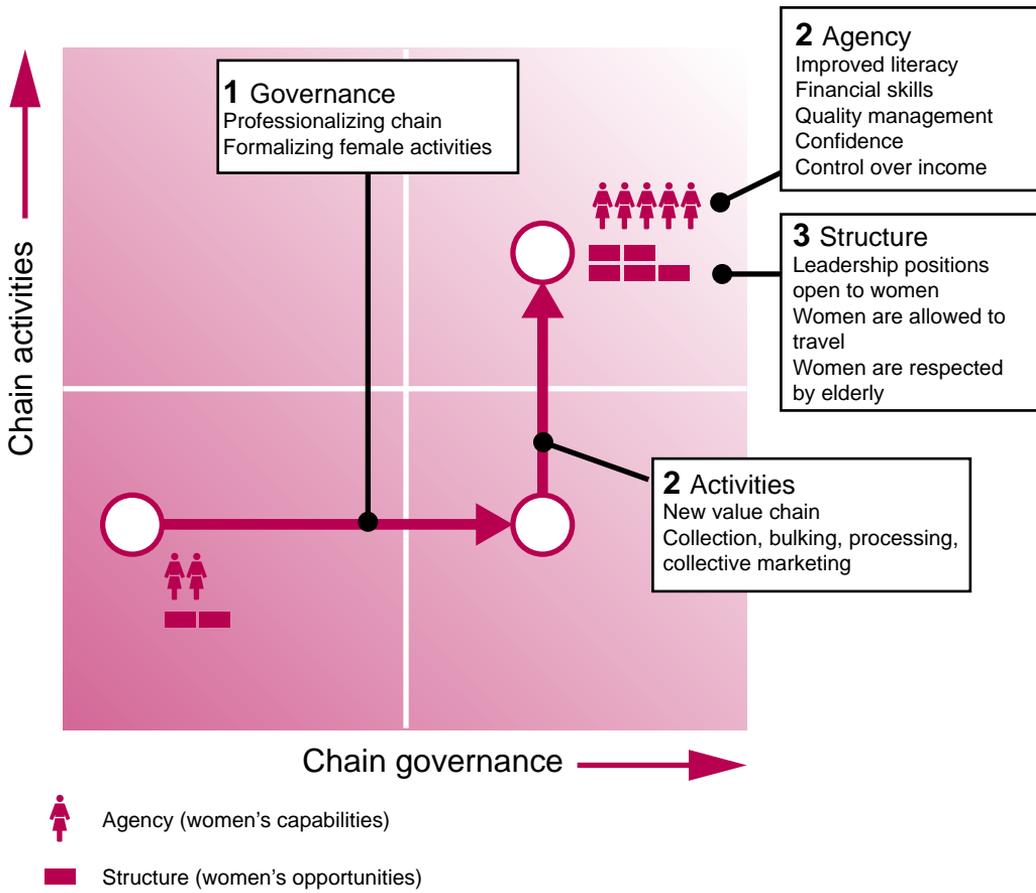


Figure 4.2. Changes in the shea chain in Guinea

## Case 4.2 When trees mean empowerment in Ghana

*Elvis Tangem Paul Nfor*

Compared to their neighbours, people in Kananto, a community in west Gonja district in northern Ghana, are fairly well off. This is not because of tourist income, even though the Mole National Park is only 12 km away. Rather, it is because local women make money from shea nuts and butter.

The community depends on small-scale farming and harvesting resources from the nearby forests, including shea, honey, locust beans (which are fermented to make *dawadawa*, a local seasoning). More than 95% of the people who gather, process and market these forest products, especially the shea nuts, are women. The work is hard, and these products are not as profitable as most crops.

Nevertheless, shea nuts bring money into the community. Women have built many microenterprises that pick, process and market the nuts. They sell their produce to local buyers, who then sell on to industries in Ghana or to exporters who ship the product to Europe, Asia and the USA. Ghana produces over 180,000 tonnes of shea nuts a year; it exports over 40,000 tonnes of these, generating more than \$100 million a year. In Ghana, the shea sector as a whole employs more than 900,000 women and men in a population of 24 million.

### Need for business support

Despite the size of the market, shea is often seen as a supplement to the income from agriculture, livestock and other sources. It is typically viewed as a low-income enterprise for women. Despite its commercial potential, it has not received the attention it deserves from either the government or development organizations. It lacks the support needed to foster growth and tap women's potential in businesses and community development.

Shea trees are common in northern Ghana, but their number is decreasing as they are cut down to make charcoal or the land is cleared for other reasons. Nut production is also threatened as old trees decline in productivity.

### The village tree enterprise

Tree Aid, an NGO working in the Sahel, developed a project called "village tree enterprise" to support women and men using forest resources as a source of income in Ghana's three northernmost regions: the Upper West, Upper East and Northern regions. This project was conducted in collaboration with the government's Wildlife and Forest Service, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and six local community-based organizations. The project also aimed to increase the number of trees needed to sustain market demand.

The project partners helped local communities and entrepreneurs to recognize the importance of forest products like shea in generating income, and the significant role that women entrepreneurs can play in this value chain. The project enabled them to understand the products and the market system, their own roles in the value chain, and changes such as increasing demand. It showed them how to ensure their businesses remain profitable. It helped the producers to form business groups focusing on particular activities, and to develop businesses plans to link them with markets and banks. It trained women and men to better bargain and negotiate prices for their products. In addition, it trained women in leadership and family life skills so they could cope with existing and emerging social challenges. It arranged for women in the shea business to receive small loans to increase the volume of their businesses.

### Turning shea into a serious business

Over 900 members from ten villages organized themselves into 42 “enterprise units”, aggregating, selling and buying shea nuts, with women taking up leadership roles. Tree Aid established an enterprise-development revolving fund to provide small loans to these groups, giving priority to women groups in the shea sector. Over 450 women have received such loans. The fund charges 10% interest, and the group guarantees repayment.

Positive changes in the lives of the women and their businesses were evident within a few months after first loans were disbursed. The financial boost has enabled the women to more than double the volume of their businesses. According to Jalia, a member of the Suummubahiasa enterprise group in Timie:

*“I have increased the numbers of shea bags I produce from initially 8 to now 38. I now understand how to analyse market and can decide when to sell and when not to.”*

For women, being organized in groups and working together gives them confidence they did not have before. Bargaining as a group led to better prices, greatly stimulating the amount of shea in community markets. The women also buy shea nuts from neighbouring communities and process them into butter. The groups have been trained to use processing methods that meet quality standards.

The shea butter sector is now recognized as a serious business. The potentials and contribution of the women in development is being acknowledged. Both women and men in the shea business hold regular meetings under women’s leadership, and groups have increased in unity. So what has changed?

- Women now have a bigger say how the money they earn is used. They make decisions on how to improve their productivity.
- Women’s dependency on their husbands and male relatives has decreased. This has boosted their confidence and self-respect, as well as the respect from other community members.
- Since the beginning of the interventions, shea prices have continued to increase. Women can buy and store the nuts to sell later when prices are higher.

- The women's groups are becoming members of professional bodies such as the Ghana shea network.

However, as the shea market becomes more profitable, new dangers arise: a take-over by mainstream businesses, or larger women-owned business undermining smaller ones.

### Analysing the change

The change started with removing barriers women faced by investing in their basic skills (**agency**). New skills and organization into groups enabled women to decide what and when to sell, and gave them a stronger voice in decisions in the chain (**governance**). Being formally organized also helped women obtain funds and loans. Women started to produce more and add value by processing the nuts into butter (**chain activities**). Their success led to changing attitudes towards women: women are now more respected and have more freedom to take their own decisions.

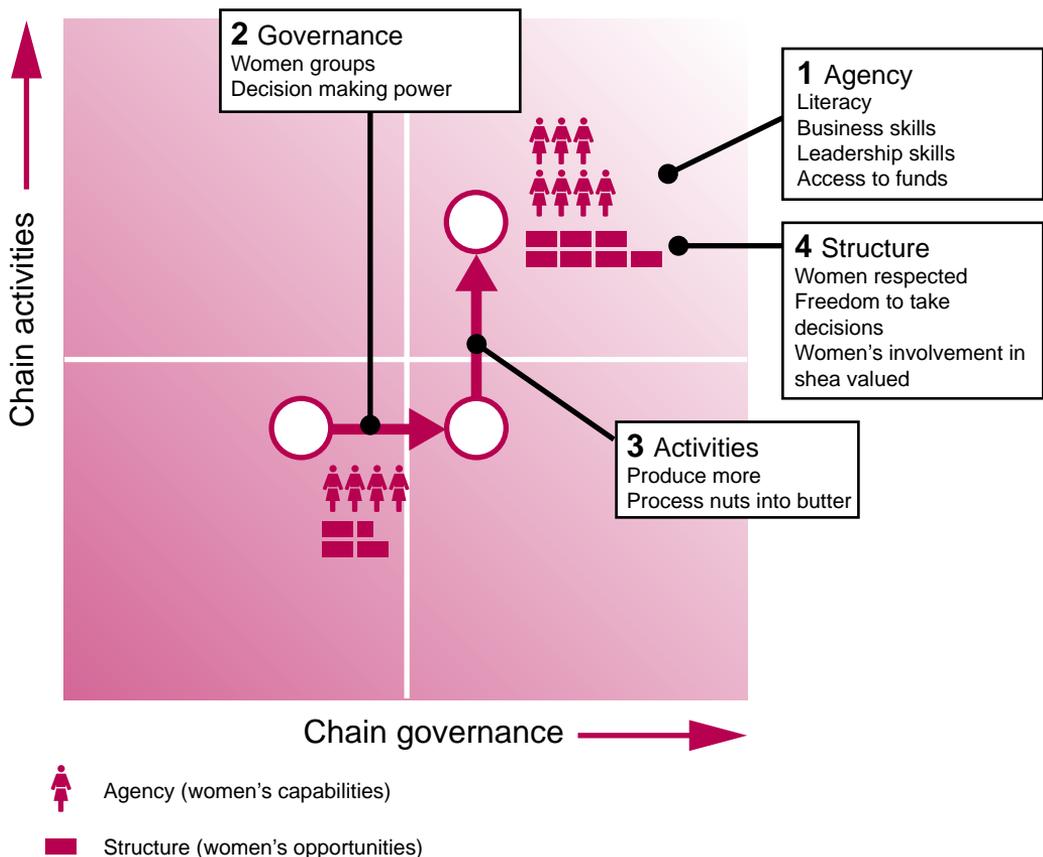


Figure 4.3. Changes in the shea chain in Ghana

Changes along the four dimensions were all modest. The biggest change was in structure: women's opportunities to be part of business, and to be valued for this. For this to happen, it was essential to first increase women's capabilities (agency) and to support their organization (governance). This enabled them to get loans and make business investments.

#### **Box 4.4. Assessing 10 years of shea chain support in Burkina Faso**

Shea is an important export crop for Burkina Faso. Half the country's shea nuts are turned into butter for the local market and home consumption, while most of the rest is sold as nuts to the food industry. Big multinationals have started buying large amounts to produce butter on an industrial scale. The remaining 3% is exported as high-quality butter for the cosmetics industry.

At over 80%, illiteracy levels among women in Burkina Faso are very high. Women in the shea chain have received a lot of assistance over a long period from different sources (including the government, donors and NGOs). NGOs have set up public-private partnerships and manage relations with export clients. The focus of their support has been on producing butter rather than nuts, and especially on high-quality butter (organic, Fairtrade) for the export cosmetics market. It was decided by donors that only women's groups would receive support.

A handful of educated women have organized themselves in rural areas around shea activities, gathering around them uneducated shea producers. For more than 10 years, these same groups have received support. But this has not led to the desired result. Their equipment, training, involvement in certification schemes etc., have been heavily subsidized. The educated leaders know very well how to meet the criteria of donors and projects, and tend to run "projects" as their private businesses, sometimes using the group members as labourers who have little or no influence on decision-making. The groups that receive support are rarely profitable. It has proved difficult to change this top-down tradition between educated leaders and uneducated members.

While NGOs are focusing on the export market, the regional and domestic markets for shea butter and nuts have undergone changes and now offer new opportunities. While women miss these opportunities and stick to their traditional position in the shea chain (collecting nuts and processing them into butter), rural men are aware of these developments and have entered the business of trading kernels.

One impediment to change is that shea has become big business for NGOs: they find it easy to get funds for economic activity for rural women. The leaders of women's groups have gladly made use of this opportunity. Although this shows that women certainly have an entrepreneurial spirit to access support, it has not led to entrepreneurial behaviour in the chain. Women lack the knowledge, for example, on managing certification schemes and on market developments. Moreover, it has led to unfair competition, as only a small group of women keep on receiving subsidies.

The Shea Network of Burkinabè Women (REKAF) tried to create an organization to defend the interests of women working in the shea sector. But there are conflicting interests between different women in the chain (e.g., between those who collect the nuts, those who buy nuts from them to turn into butter, and those who use the butter to make soap, creams, etc.). This makes it difficult for an organization and for individual women leaders to represent all women, and is paralysing women groups.

*More information: Jennie van der Mheen-Sluijer, Agricultural Economics Research Institute. LEI Wageningen UR*

## Making butter out of shea

Both the preceding cases are relatively new and successful experiences in the shea chain. In neighbouring Burkina Faso, NGOs have supported she chains for a longer period. Box 4.4 illustrates some of the pitfalls they have encountered.

Shea can provide quite different opportunities. Box 4.5 illustrates what shea meant for women in a vulnerable setting: a refugee camp in Uganda.

When we look at the two main cases in this chapter – Guinea and Ghana – both build on typically female activities in shea nut collection and processing. They demonstrate a number of advantages:

- Supporting shea chains makes it easy to reach women: targeting these specific chains automatically brings you to women.
- Women are already involved in the shea-related activities; thus they feel confident to engage in additional ones higher up the chain.
- Nut collection and shea butter production is not (yet) linked to land ownership: women do not have to own the land where they collect the nuts.
- This approach generates little opposition from or interference by men, because men see the activities as female tasks.
- The approach can be purely facilitating, and a project can create a big impact with relatively little intervention.
- This approach is cost-effective because a large group of women can be reached with relatively little means.
- If the intervention fails, women can return to the traditional, informal chain. It is in this sense, fail-safe.

The cases from Burkina Faso and Uganda present quite a different picture. The description in Box 4.4 is critical of 10 years of experience in supporting the shea chain in Burkina Faso. Box 4.5, on the other hand, shows how shea offered Ugandan refugees an opportunity to rebuild their livelihoods.

If we look at the kind of changes that occurred, we see some differences in focus and starting points. In the case of **Guinea**, reorganizing the shea chain was the start, with a focus on the organization of the women. Training helped them increase the volume and quality of the butter, and gave them self-esteem. They became better in what they already did: processing shea nuts into butter. Eventually they took up leadership positions and gained more freedom, for example to travel outside their villages.

In **Ghana**, the primary focus was on removing barriers for women to benefit more from collecting nuts. They received training and got organized in groups. This increased their decision-making power. They got loans, and they now collect more nuts and sell them at a better price. The women are now more respected as business people.

In **Uganda** the starting point was very different: helping refugees to rebuild their livelihoods. In this case shea was one of the few opportunities these women had.



It was also a temporarily solution, supporting the women in rebuilding their livelihoods and self-esteem.

The development of strong leadership and entrepreneurial skills among women in the shea chain can be a springboard for their emancipation and empowerment. But, as we have seen in **Burkina Faso**, there is a risk of over-dependency on donor support. Those planning interventions in shea should be aware of this danger, and of the risk of the chain being taken over by outsiders as it is commercialized.

Together, the cases and boxes show that shea can be an important source of income for women, especially in traditional rural areas. Women face little opposition when engaging in this typically female economic activity. Moreover, shea is suitable for women in vulnerable situations where they are trying to build their livelihoods and have no other assets. The case in Burkina also showed the downside of too much donor support: this can turn shea into a project instead of a business: women get good at writing project proposals rather than turning shea into a profitable business.

Many development organizations choose the shea chain as a way to reach women and to reduce poverty. Tapping into the economic potential of the shea chain allows the smooth, cost-effective and wide-scale emancipation of women with a low risk of community opposition or takeover by men.

The professionalization of traditionally female activities can work only if investments are made in building women's capacity and if illiteracy is reduced. Strengthening women's organizational capacity is key for accessing services and

### Box 4.5. Linking refugees with the market in Uganda

Otuke County in northern Uganda has suffered greatly under the rebel activities of the Lord's Resistance Army. When the North Uganda Shea Project started work in 2005, the Rwot Ber Women's Association members all lived in camps for internally displaced people. They produced shea butter on a small scale, but got little return for their efforts.

The project focused on organic shea butter and was built around a partnership of three key players in the value chain: the Rwot Ber association in Otuke County, a processing company based in Lira (ALCODE), and an exporter based in Kampala (KFP Ltd). Labelling the shea butter as "organic" was a relatively easy way of upgrading it and helped to access a more favourable market, fetching a higher price.

Although this did not generate a huge amount of money, it did enable the women collectors to earn more in an otherwise hopeless environment. When the project ended in 2008, 300 Rwot Ber members had delivered shea nuts to the project, earning an extra \$27.30 each. Not much, but still something. The project also built the capacity of these vulnerable women. By working in groups, they were able to find solutions to common problems. The women returned to their village homes somewhat more empowered.

More information: Inge Vos, AgroEco-Louis Bolk Institute.

having decision-making power. In order to grasp market opportunities and to anticipate on changes in the market women's organizations have to function like a business. The case of Guinea showed how a farmer organization can become entrepreneurial. In this case:

- No subsidies were provided except the equipment for start-up.
- A professional manager was hired to ensure sufficient entrepreneurial skills.
- The system of supplies and deliveries was kept simple and based on public transport (the cooperative had no vehicle).
- The national market was the initial target, allowing marketing skills to grow gradually over time.

### Conclusions

The interventions in this chapter are gender-specific: they work within the existing gender division of resources and responsibilities, and respond to women's practical needs. They stay close to the realities of both women and men.

Producing shea butter does not depend on women owning land. Women can collect the nuts freely, and producing butter is one of the few ways that landless women can earn money. Although involving women in shea is therefore relatively easy (even for women living in vulnerable setting), women remain landless and cannot secure the future supply of the nuts.

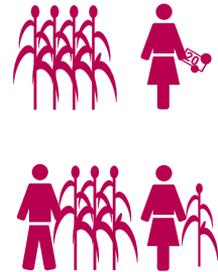
In the shea chain, men are used to seeing their wives and mothers earn a small income by making butter. There is little risk that men will suddenly start to take over such labour-intensive activities or try to confiscate this typical source of female income. Nevertheless, the risks of a takeover by more competent individuals

are real as the capacity of shea producers is usually extremely low. In some West African countries, we see new actors are rapidly taking over the nut collection, and female butter producers may well find themselves cut off from their raw materials. In these countries, private investors are recognizing the commercial value of shea. They have established processing factories, and buyers scour the villages for nuts. Landowners have started to realize that the nuts have a value, just like other crop. That leaves women with only the trees growing on common property and in forests.

Supporting and organizing female shea producers are not only important to increase their income, but also to maintain their supply of their raw material. Nuts may be collected as far as 20 km from the village. Men are more mobile, so may in time become more efficient in collecting nuts from distant locations. Helping the women increase their mobility (for example, helping them buy donkey carts or three-wheeler cargo motorcycles) is one way of guaranteeing their access to nuts. Strong producer organizations and capacity building of butter producers are essential to prevent women from losing their source of income and to enable them to earn money from their traditional activities.

### Situating the arguments

In professionalizing informal chains like shea, different arguments (presented in Chapter 2) appear to be relevant. Shea is seen both as business opportunity for women (**servicing women is good for business and for women**) and as a **poverty reduction** strategy. Box 4.5 on shea in Uganda presents an example of how in a vulnerable setting women's involvement in shea supports them in building up their livelihoods.



## 4.2 Livestock: From traditional responsibilities to new opportunities

In Chapter 4.1 we looked how women's informal activities can be formalized, taking shea as an example. In this chapter the starting-point is rather similar, but we look at livestock.

In many societies livestock rearing is seen as an extension of women's traditional roles. Women usually take care of small animals such as goats and chickens; men tend to look after larger animals like cows and camels.

Raising small animals is a good option for women who are tied to the house and have few opportunities or resources. It helps them earn money while staying at home. Poultry rearing is an example: many women keep a few chickens in the backyard. Doing so does not require many skills. But it is limited: it produces

### Box 4.6. Removing barriers to transform traditional responsibilities into new opportunities

**Entry point.** Removing barriers preventing women from turning traditional responsibilities into new opportunities.

**Why do it?** Women traditionally take care of livestock, but various barriers – including limited mobility and a lack of individual capacity – stop them from benefiting economically. Building their capacity and linking them to markets lets them turn their family responsibilities into businesses. This approach stays close to traditional roles and is cautious about removing firmly rooted traditions, so can be expected to meet little resistance from men and women.

**How to do it?** We distinguish four main interventions to support women in livestock chains:

- Reducing distance to markets (both physical and mental).
- Building capacity, including developing entrepreneurial skills and leadership.
- Strengthening the organizational capacity of women's groups.
- Ensuring access to finance.

**When is it a good strategy?** The approach is particularly suitable:

- In vulnerable societies (e.g., post-disaster or drought areas) where women face constraints in rebuilding their livelihoods.
- In pastoralist societies where women traditionally take care of livestock.

**Conditions for success.**

- Trading livestock which belong to women.
- The involvement of local authorities and support services.
- Establishing market linkages through facilitation.
- The support of men.

too few birds or eggs to sell in a large or organized market. Finding a market and negotiating good prices can be hard. Women who are not allowed to travel far find it difficult to get their product to the market. A lack of information and confidence make it tough for them to establish links with a buyer.

More barriers occur with larger livestock. In pastoralist societies, many women are illiterate and lack confidence and skills. Their menfolk can hinder them from buying and selling larger animals outside their home areas: the men do not think women can or should do this kind of work. But their ideas may change if the women start trading close to home and the family starts to benefit.

Rather than helping women get to distant markets, it may be easier to bring the markets to the women. The cases in this chapter show how this can catalyse change. They indicate that opportunities from livestock are particularly promising for marginalized women who live in a vulnerable setting (such as in the drylands or after a disaster) where they lack assets but have to contribute to the family's income (Box 4.6).

This chapter presents two cases that show how raising livestock can bring economic opportunities to women, by linking them to markets and building their capacity. In the Kenya case, this meant creating a physical marketplace. In India, the market is an institution rather than a location.

- **Case 4.3, Cattle trading in Kenya**, tells how in the Samburu pastoral community, where men traditionally own the livestock, women got involved in trading cattle, camels and goats. This area experiences serious droughts, making life hard for women and men alike. Existing markets were distant, and animals fetched low prices. The answer was to organize the women into groups, give them the skills they needed, and to establish a market close by.
- **Case 4.4, Commercial poultry farming in India**, illustrates how women in an area devastated by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami got involved in commercial poultry. The men had left for the cities in search of work. The women stayed in their villages to take care of their houses and families. With few economic opportunities, raising poultry turned out to be a real opportunity for the women.

## Case 4.3 A livestock market empowers women in northern Kenya

*Julius Lemalasia*

“How old is this animal?” “How many litres of milk a day?” “What’s the price?”

The livestock market bustles with activity and noise. Buyers inspect the camels and cattle, check that the cows are in milk, and haggle with the owners of the goats and chickens. Local people sell cooked food, honey, eggs, beadwork, hides, meat and other items produced in the area. They buy things like groceries and clothes.

The market is held once a month, on a Thursday, in Lolkuniani, a village in Samburu East in northern Kenya. It has a turnover of 5 million shillings (\$65,000). The name “Lolkuniani” used to mean a type of sack, but now has come to mean “moneybags”.

Most of the people in the district are Samburu, a pastoralist ethnic group. In Samburu culture, it is the men who own the livestock and are responsible for buying and selling. But the Lolkuniani market is unusual: men are a minority. Most of the buyers and sellers are women.

### **Bringing the market to women**

Samburu East is a dry area in northern Kenya, named after the Samburu, the main pastoralist group in the area. These pastoralists herd their camels, cattle and goats among the sparse grass and acacia trees that dot the brown landscape, in search of pasture and water. It is the men and boys who tend the herd, while the women look after the milking animals and the young back in the homestead.

The women’s work tends to be invisible: they do a lot of the work, but it is the men who own the animals and make decisions on what and when to sell. The women are not allowed to engage in trade because the men fear they will lose their authority in the family, or because the markets are too far away. Plus, most women are illiterate and are not permitted to attend training.

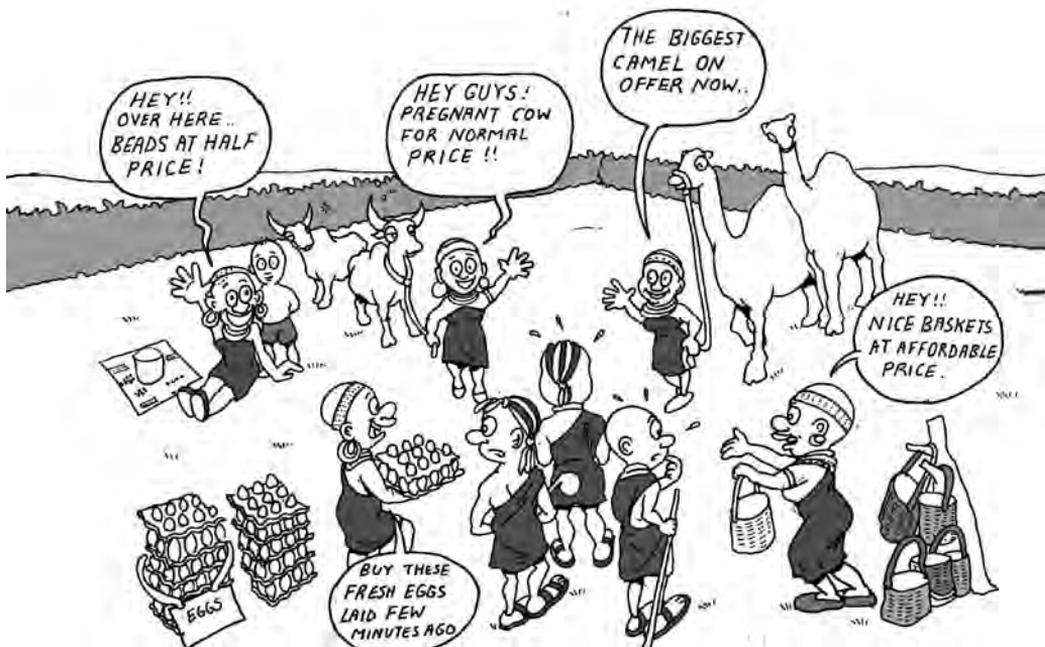
In 2006, SIDEPE (the Samburu Integrated Development Programme), a Kenyan NGO supported by Cordaid, analysed the situation of women’s groups in the district. It found that the groups lacked skills in business, management and literacy. SIDEPE started work with 30 of the groups – 900 individuals in all. It trained them on financial management, revolving credit schemes and group dynamics, put them in touch with microfinance institutions, and helped them share ideas and experience with people in other parts of Kenya.

But the women’s situation did not improve much. The main reason was that women were trading their livestock within their villages. There were few buyers, and prices were low.

If the women could not travel to a market, the answer was to bring the market to the women. SIDEP discussed this idea with the local authorities, the ministries of livestock and social services, and male and female traders. These partners selected a site in Lolkuniani, laid out paddocks to hold the animals, and fenced them with thorn fences. The market opened in 2007. The benefits have been enormous – not only for the women, but also for the men, for the local community and the region as a whole. The bustle has attracted traders from outside the area. Nearly all the women's groups trade at the Lolkuniani market. More buyers means more sales, higher prices and better incomes. Many of the women have diversified into other types of products, enabling to cope better with drought and other emergencies.

The community decided to establish an association to manage the market. This charges a small fee for every animal sold. SIDEP has been building the capacity of this association to collect this revenue (which it shares 50:50 with the local authority), and manage the profits. In 2009, the association sponsored 300 young people from the community to go to secondary school and college. The association is planning to build market stalls, pens to hold animals, as well as an administration office.

Women have started to take on leadership roles in the community. They have become members of committees responsible for district development, roads, water, and so on. This is possible because of a change in the attitude of their husbands, who are now much more ready to accept that women may do business. Some husbands have even started contributing to their wives' businesses, for example by taking care of the animals while they are away at the market.





Livestock has become an important source of income for many households, rather than being used mainly for subsistence. Before, only 10% of households earned money from livestock; now 70% do so.

The Lolkuniani market contributes to local economic development. It attracts people, businesses and services, and is developing into an economic hub. SIDEP is exploring the possibility replicating the approach with other local authorities in elsewhere in Kenya. The revenue-sharing model appears to be unique in Kenya, and may be a good basis for partnerships between the public and private sectors.

### Analysing the change

The pastoralist women in Samburu already took care of the livestock, but their contribution to the livestock chain was not recognized. Change began when SIDEP trained women groups and built their skills (**agency**). The women gained the confidence to get loans and become visible in the chain. But without access to a market no big change could be expected. Because the women were not allowed to travel, the market was brought to them. That allowed them to start trading (**activities**). They became involved in decision-making on different levels (**governance**). Eventually men started to appreciate the women's contribution to family income, and were willing to take over some traditional women's tasks (**structure**). The market attracted other buyers and services. The quality of animals improved and prices for cattle increased.

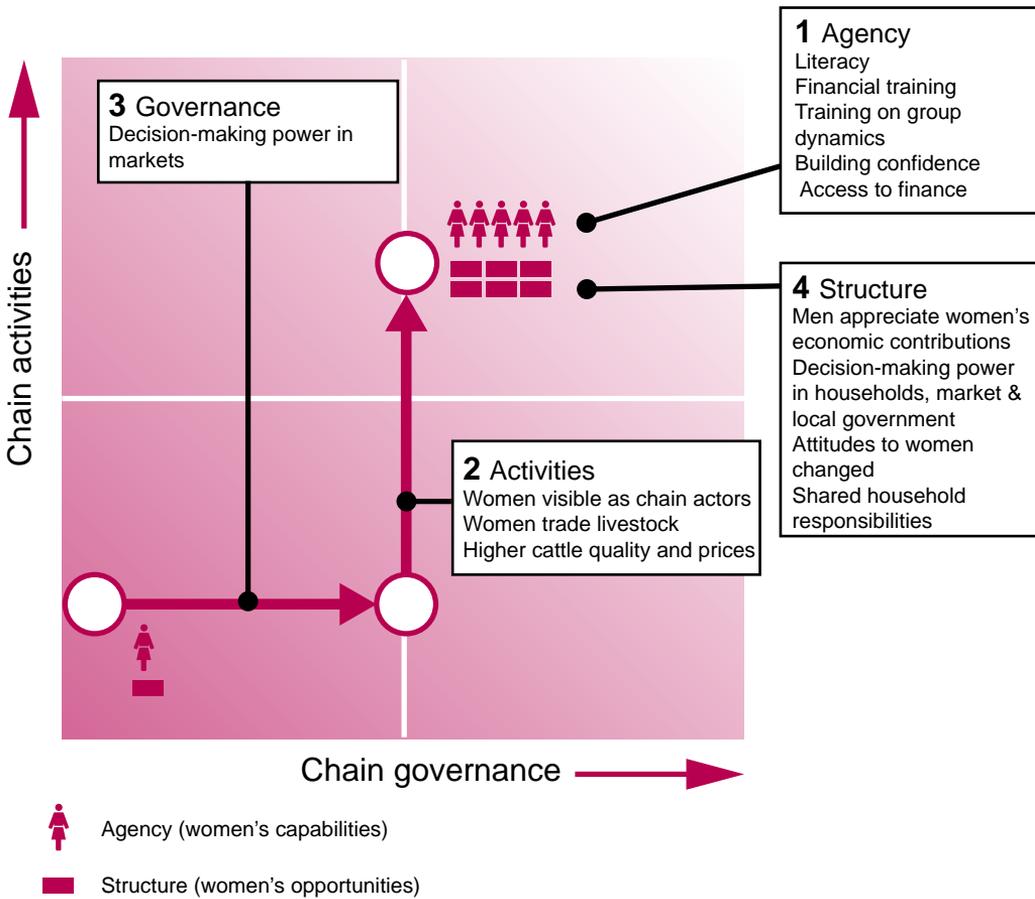


Figure 4.4. Changes in the livestock chain in Kenya

Agency was seen as the smallest change: the women's mobility did not increase as the markets were brought closer to the women, avoiding the need for them to travel to market. It may be that men will gradually realize the benefits that women bring to their families and the community, so will allow them to travel outside their villages. These more structural changes often take time.

## Case 4.4 Rebuilding after the tsunami: Chickens in Tamil Nadu, India

*Meera Sundararajan and Deva Prakash*

The tsunami that swept over the coast of southern India in 2004 shattered many lives. Among them were the Irulas, a tribal community in the Killai region of Cuddalore district in Tamil Nadu. They worked as farm labourers and fished for shrimp in the brackish lagoons that line the coast. Their villages on the lagoons were too far away from the beach to be hit by the giant waves, but the surge of seawater flooded the fields where they had worked and left the lagoons too salty for shrimp. Both the Irulas' sources of livelihood had been destroyed.

They had few options. The local fisherfolk – a different caste – do not allow anyone else to fish in the sea. So the men left Killai in search of work in the towns, leaving the women at home to take care of the children.

### **Double discrimination**

As part of the massive response to the tsunami disaster, CARE<sup>1</sup> looked for ways to help the Irula women. It realized that their problems were rather deeper than the shallow lagoon they lived by. They were discriminated against both as members of a marginalized group and as women: they married young, had little or no education, and mastered few skills. They were paid less than men for a day's work. The salt water would recede – but the problems would remain.

During discussions between CARE and the Irula women, the idea came up to keep poultry for sale. Some already raised a handful of chickens in their tiny backyards for eggs, meat and sale. The women said that if they got together, they could produce more. There were no caste restrictions on their raising chickens, and they could keep them close to home – making it easy for them to combine the work with their daily activities. Chickens grow quickly – from hatchling to sale in just 35 days – so there would be quick turnover and a regular income.

CARE helped 60 of the women to organize into five groups of 12 members each. It trained them in group dynamics and leadership. Each group elected a leader and an assistant. The two leaders from each group then formed a higher-level group, and CARE trained them how to represent their groups' interests.

It then helped the women to work out a business plan to raise broilers. The groups submitted their plan to a fund set up to respond to the tsunami. They were able to get a grant of \$46,000 and a loan of \$11,000. CARE provided an additional grant of \$31,000.

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## Finding land

Where to build the poultry sheds? The women had no land of their own, so they tried to lease land nearby. But few of the local landowners wanted deal with such a low-caste group of women. Some tried to cheat them into becoming labourers rather than owners of their own business.

Frustrated, the women had almost given up – some even suggested returning the funds to the government. CARE called a meeting of the Irula community – men and women – to discuss the problem. The male leaders found a solution: the women could lease some community land behind the houses. Excited, the women began putting up the sheds. Each shed was to accommodate at least 3,000 birds, and each of the five groups was to have its own shed.

## Reaching a deal

Meanwhile, CARE was helping the women find a buyer for the poultry. Several medium-sized poultry firms in the area used an outgrower system: the firm signed a contract with individual farmers to raise chickens; the company provided the hatchlings, feed and veterinary care, while the farmers provided the shed and looked after the chickens until they were ready for sale. The firms pick up the grown birds, then pay the farmers.

CARE and the women's groups eventually reached such a deal with the Guhan Poultry Company, based in Cuddalore, 90 km away. This was the first such deal between this company and a group of women; before, Guhan had contracted individual men farmers.

## Profits from poultry

Production began in early 2010. Each group produces about 3,000 birds every 35 days. The women needed to get a regular income, rather than waiting for payment for each batch of chickens. Their business plan had factored in the cost of the women's own labour, so they were able to fix a wage of Rs 250 (\$5.40) for a day's work in the sheds – three times more than the normal daily wage for women in the area. That gave everyone an incentive to contribute. The members take turns, with each one working two or three days a week. In addition, the group shares out any profit they make at the end of each cycle, after deducting the loan repayments and other expenses. That gives each member an average of Rs 1,700 (about \$37) at the end of each production cycle.

Economic success has had multiplier effects in other spheres. The villagers' family conditions have improved as the women began to save money and invest in their children's education and renovating their houses. Several have bought mobile phones. Their exposure to banks, government departments and poultry companies has increased their confidence. They are no longer shy in front of men. They monitor the inputs that Guhan provides to make sure they conform to the contract.

Local perceptions of women and men have changed: there is now a greater sense of mutual respect and equity. The Irula men support their wives' business, and

the women sometimes employ them when they run short of labour – at the same wage as the women. The local poultry producers, all higher-caste men, have welcomed the women into their association. Neighbouring farmers have begun buying poultry manure.

### Analysing the change

The change began with building women's confidence to trade chickens (**agency**). Groups of women were trained in the skills they would need. They elected leaders and developed a business plan. With support of male leaders, they eventually managed to get some land and a loan. They were now ready to build sheds and raise broilers (**chain activities**). They can get the services they need to produce good-quality products, and were able to find a buyer and negotiate good prices. In a short time they have gained decision-making power in the livestock chain (**governance**). Women leaders are now invited to monthly community meetings along with men (who are higher-caste), and they are supported by the community leaders (**structure**). Their economic success has had multiplier effects in other spheres, benefiting the community as a whole.

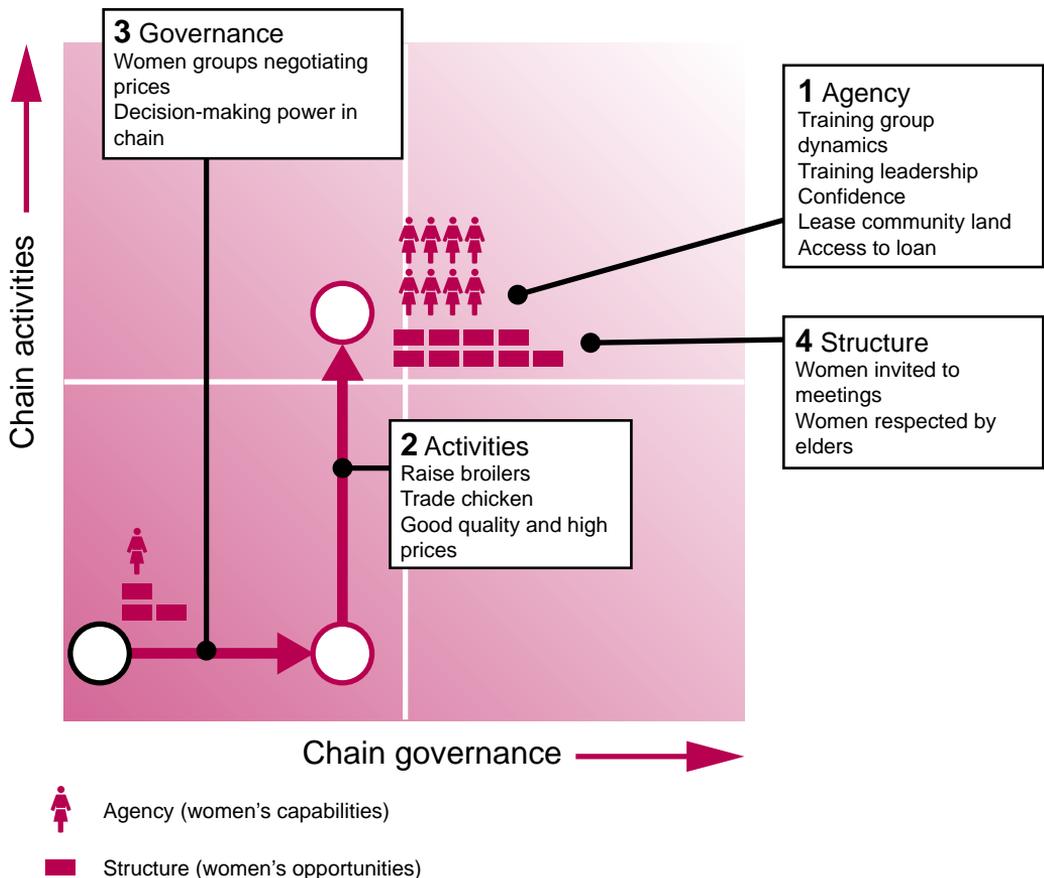


Figure 4.5. Changes in the poultry chain in India

The biggest change was in women's capabilities and confidence. Many activities contributed to increase these aspects of agency. They needed the support of male leaders to use community land. Without this, they could not have built sheds and raised the chickens. Later, when their business was a success, men wanted to join their association. That again boosted their self-esteem. The support of traditional male leaders was key for the success. As in the case of livestock in Kenya (Case 4.3), the success had economic spin-offs: neighbouring farmers have begun buying poultry manure from the women.

## Taking stock of livestock

The two cases in this chapter both show that bringing markets closer to women can catalyse change. Overcoming the problem of distance improved women's access to markets and services such as transport and information.

In the India case, establishing a trade relation also created jobs for women. Larger-scale production attracted inputs and services, and enabled the women to join a growers' association. In Kenya, bringing the market closer enlarged the women's markets, attracted other traders and service providers, and allowed the women to diversify their trade. Eventually the market triggered the development of an economic hub in the area.

In both cases, women needed more skills and confidence before they could benefit from livestock. Training in business skills, leadership and group dynamics gave them the skills they needed. The women now take themselves more seriously as businesspeople – as do their menfolk and the local authorities.

Organization was central to the success of both interventions. Forming groups allowed the women to get finance and technical services, and built their confidence. In India, the financial services came before access to markets, and technical services were provided as part of the market linkage. Working in groups increased volumes, gave the women better prices, and let them share risks. In Kenya, pre-existing women groups were trained and shared their experiences. They set up an association, which managed the market together with local authorities.

Financial and technical services have been crucial to let the women meet market demands and improve their animals' health. Finance was necessary for women to enter the business in the first place. In India, funding from a government disaster fund paid to put up five chicken sheds; that let the women start discussions with a poultry company on a business tie-up. In Kenya the women used microfinance loans to purchase animals and start other businesses; they used the income to buy more animals.

The entry point of livestock trading has some advantages in rebuilding livelihoods and empowering women:

- Women (especially in pastoralist societies) already take care of livestock. Build their confidence to engage in trading takes little effort. In India, poultry-raising is one of the few activities that is acceptable for women of all castes.
- Women do not need to own (or have the right to use) land in order to trade livestock.
- Bringing markets closer to women is easier than trying to help women get to faraway markets. Samburu men disapprove of women travelling away from their villages. For Irula women, it is not so much their men but more their caste that restricts them in travelling.
- Helping women to access markets, combined with capacity building and access to finance, leads to higher returns.

- By aggregating their output, the women become more attractive business partners. That attracts both buyers and service suppliers.
- Women tend to reinvest part of their income in the community, boosting local development.

Some changes occurred quickly; others took longer. Sometimes the men started to support their wives only after they had seen how they (the men) and the community were benefitting from the women's trading. The Kenyan men now give money and moral support to their wives for trading. On Thursdays, the men take care of the children and animals when women are at the market. In India, the male leaders were supportive from the moment CARE facilitated a community meeting, when they allocated land for the poultry sheds. The Irula women also sometimes get their husbands to help out with the work: an emerging shift in traditional roles.

The cases demonstrate that trading larger and smaller livestock can be an economic opportunity for women who are traditionally bound to their houses and villages. By bringing trading opportunities closer to women, combined with capacity building and helping them to access the right skills, knowledge and finance, and organization women are able to benefit. On the long-term, the structures in place that constrain women's mobility should be removed for women's deeper empowerment and their emancipation.

## **Conclusions**

The interventions in the two cases were gender-specific. Where men are absent and women have become breadwinners, the traditional roles of women begin to change. Women play an important role in rebuilding their livelihoods and contribute to local economic development. That paves the way for their emancipation and empowerment. The case of India showed the importance of a supportive environment to realize these changes. In this case this was addressed it right at the beginning, with the men acting as the women's allies in terms of resource allocation and market negotiation.

Building on traditional responsibilities and changing them into opportunities can help to address poverty and gender issues, especially in difficult situations. The Irula community in India had to recover from the tsunami. It was not feasible to introduce the women to completely new activities with cultural barriers to entry. In Kenya, the mobility issue and property ownership were major constraints for women. So it was easier to start with what they knew – i.e., looking after cattle, and help them turn this into a business.

There are some conditions that determine whether livestock trading can empower women. For example, the livestock must belong to women. Ownership of the animals is important: without it, women cannot make decisions to buy or sell, and do not control the resulting income. Another condition was the involvement of government and the private sector. In both Kenya and India, the support services increased and their quality improved. Establishing linkages with markets and

services is vital. In both cases in this chapter, this helped women get veterinary services – in Kenya from community animal health workers and the government, and in India through the poultry company.

### Situating the arguments

Taking a closer look at the arguments used in this chapter, we see that all interventions take the barriers that women face as a starting point, putting emphasis on the women's lack of choices and rights. Both cases took place in a vulnerable setting. As starting point two sets of arguments are particularly relevant: **social justice** and **poverty reduction**.

When we look at the impact of the interventions we see that the strategies contributed not only to economic opportunities for women but also for others (e.g., the emerging economic hub in Kenya). In replicating these kinds of strategies, the business argument, **servicing women is good for business and the economy**, can be a strong case to put forward in convincing local governments and male community members.



## 4.3 Dairy: Transforming systems through new roles for women

This subchapter is also about livestock, but focuses on dairy farming. Taking care of cows and calves and milking the cows produce a small but secure income for many rural women. They are typically considered as female tasks. Done close to the house, these tasks are seen as part of women's household ("reproductive") work. They rarely make enough money to sustaining a livelihood, but are more of a supplementary source of household and personal income.

Milk is important for poor families' food security - and especially for children and women. But they also sell it. They have to do so every day, because without processing or cooling, it goes off. It is usually the women who do the unpaid work, while men sell the milk.

This subchapter looks at how to tackle poverty by building on traditional female tasks in dairying. Sometimes these tasks can be transformed from small-scale and informal to a larger scale with linkages to a formal market. Apart from improving their dairy business, women can also take on roles further along the value chain that were previously done by men, such as collecting, processing, marketing and transport. They can also provide veterinary services and management.

Why do many women not take on such roles or upscale their business? Often this is because of a lack of support from social relations and business cultures. Women tend to market their milk informally and as individuals. Without the benefits of formal marketing and collective action, they have little bargaining power. Cultures prohibit many from leaving their houses or villages. That prevents them from providing veterinary services (which require travel), improving the amount and quality of the milk they produce, or taking on new tasks in the value chain.

Because dairy farming (particularly milking) is a traditional role for women, it is a relatively easy point of departure. One aim is for women to take part in economic decision-making, and to gain control over the income and resources in the dairy sector. Another aim is for women to develop their knowledge and skills, improve their decision making and bargaining power, and increase their self-esteem (Box 4.7).

This subchapter centres on two cases, one in Sri Lanka and one in Bangladesh. In both countries women do a lot of the dairy farming, but have little access to the formal market or services. In both cases, the women were able to go from small-scale farmers to a more professional role. That gave them a bigger voice in their households, in the community and even at a higher level.

- **Case 4.5, Developing opportunities in dairying in northern Sri Lanka**, looks at the aftermath of the civil war that afflicted northern Sri Lanka. Many men had died, leaving large numbers of women to take care of their families alone. Support and capacity building have given them a chance to expand their dairying activities and rebuild their livelihoods.

### Box 4.7. Create new roles for women in traditional activities

**Entry point.** Transforming the traditionally female task of taking care of animals into professional economic activities.

**Why do it?** Many small-scale female farmers feed, care for and milk dairy animals. Most sell milk at relatively low prices to collectors. By organizing and marketing as a group, they can take on new roles in the value chain and in society. With training and support, they can provide services to other (women) actors in the dairy sector.

In areas recovering from conflict and in pastoralist societies, dairying is one of the few sectors that offers economic opportunities for vulnerable women.

**How to do it?** We distinguish two types of interventions to support women in changing traditional roles in the dairy sector:

- Organization in groups: women-led cooperatives, collective marketing and knowledge exchange.
- Capacity-building: developing (entrepreneurial) skills and leadership.

**When is it a good strategy?** The approach is particularly suitable:

- In societies recovering from conflict, where many women have become the breadwinners.
- In pastoralist societies where women traditionally are involved in taking care of livestock.

**Conditions for success.**

- A gender-sensitive value chain analysis as point of departure.
- Embedding activities and services in the local community and with the private sector.
- Sensitization of men and women, and their involvement in building capacity.
- Ownership of milk animals.

- **Case 4.6, Training women livestock health workers in Bangladesh**, shows how training as professional livestock health workers has given women the confidence to start centres providing veterinary services and information. Their increased earnings make them independent businesswomen.

This subchapter also contains one box.

- **Box 4.8, Bulbul Begum: A dairy group leader in Bangladesh**, describes how the leader of a group of dairy farmers in Bangladesh, negotiated a deal with the person who artificially inseminates their cows.

## Case 4.5 Developing opportunities in dairying in northern Sri Lanka

*Ravikumar Nadarajah*

Thirty years of civil war have left many scars in Vavuniya, a district in northern Sri Lanka. Many people were killed, and many more lost their homes and livelihoods as economic and social infrastructure was destroyed and businesses were driven out. Many women lost their husbands, so are left to support their children alone.

Dairy farming is one of the few businesses still left. Dairying is an important source of income for 15,000 families – one-fifth headed by women. Four out of five village women keep one or more cows.

But milk yields are low and marketing is weak: individual farmers sell to traders who offer just Rs 13 for a litre. The average dairy producer earns just Rs 3,500 (\$35) a month – below the poverty line.

### Developing cooperatives

In 2006, Oxfam GB did an initial market assessment of opportunities for milk and milk-related produce in the district. It mapped the dairy value chain to identify the different actors in it, the market services needed to develop the chain, and the enabling environment that might affect the development of the chain. It found that dairying could be a viable business if the producers were to organize into marketing cooperatives. By setting up their own marketing system, they could sell larger volumes, bypass the traders, increase their bargaining power and demand higher prices.

Together with two government departments (cooperative development and animal production and health) and a local NGO, Oxfam GB helped set up a series of eight village-based, women-led dairy cooperatives in the district. These eight cooperatives have some 3,500 women members. The cooperatives have formed an apex body, the Vavuniya District Livestock Breeders' Cooperative Societies Union Ltd, which collects, processes, markets and distributes milk produced by the members. The district union is 80% owned by its member cooperatives.

Through this network of cooperatives, Oxfam GB and its partners have provided a range of assistance to members:

- Training and counselling individual farmers and groups in livestock management practices, milk production, business management and marketing.
- Building women's roles as producers, entrepreneurs and leaders.
- Strengthening supply mechanisms by improving milk collection and chilling systems.
- Marketing of fresh milk and dairy products.

- Institutionalizing women-managed dairy producer organizations linking them to the formal cooperative dairy industry and other related services.

### Income and independence

This broad effort has improved the lot of women in various ways.

**Production and quality.** The farmers are producing more milk and have improved the quality of the product. More milk means better nutrition and food security, as well as more to sell for a net profit of at least \$75 per month.

**Price premium.** The cooperative pays the farmers a better price for their milk than the local traders. It can do this because it deals in bulk, adds value by processing, and handles marketing. That lets it pass on more of the profit back to the farmers, which in turn means higher incomes and greater economic independence for the household.

**Control over proceeds.** If a married woman is mainly responsible for the cattle, it is usually she, rather than her husband, who gets the income. That gives her a certain financial independence. Milk production also gives widows and other women who are the heads of their households a way of earning their own income.

**New skills, new jobs.** Improved management means that the women can use their land more efficiently and can sell the dung as manure. They have moved into traditional male jobs further along the value chain, such as collecting milk, processing it, and marketing the final products. They have also begun to provide



services to the chain, such as organization, leadership, and providing veterinary care.

**A bigger role in the community.** It has become more normal for women to take on these new roles, both within the chain and in the wider community. Women are coming out of their homes, interacting with other women in the community, and becoming more visible in the society. For many, this has helped them recover from the trauma of war. Women-led cooperatives are now an accepted feature in this part of Sri Lanka. Individual women have been elected as leaders in their villages. Men encourage this trend: they realize that the women are earning money to support their family, so readily agree to do the housework and look after the children so the women can attend cooperative meetings.

**Institutional support.** The government departments of cooperatives and animal production and health have accepted women-led cooperatives as a viable strategy to promote the dairy industry. The cooperatives have realized the benefits of collective initiatives in production and marketing. Cooperatives in adjoining districts are trying to adopt similar systems.

**Diversification.** The district cooperative that organizes the dairy farmers (80% of whom are women) have begun to diversify into other products, including sweets, flavoured milk, *paneer* (a type of fresh cheese), curd and ghee (clarified butter). Women who were involved in this value addition have earned higher profits (at least \$200 per month), and some have employed some more women.

A joint study by Oxfam GB and a university found that women dairy farmers controlled 29% of the income, and couples decided jointly how to spend another 59%. The trend was towards more decision-making by the women.

Their success has led to the women becoming accepted as entrepreneurs and leaders in the community. They act as role models and motivators for other women in the area. One of the women sums it up like this:

*“Before we used to be hesitate to speak to any officers, but we now have the confidence to negotiate with others like service provider and stakeholders due this business.”*

## Analysing the change

This case is a good example of how changes along different dimensions interact. For example, organizing women into cooperatives (**governance**) was an important first step, but only in combination with capacity building and building women’s confidence (**agency**). This helped women take up **activities** further along the chain. When larger numbers of women began to work as professionals, and were economically successful, local men came to appreciate them more in economic and leadership roles (**structure**). Now the women-led cooperatives have a legal status, which has further improved the status of women. Cooperatives in adjoining districts are trying to adopt similar systems.

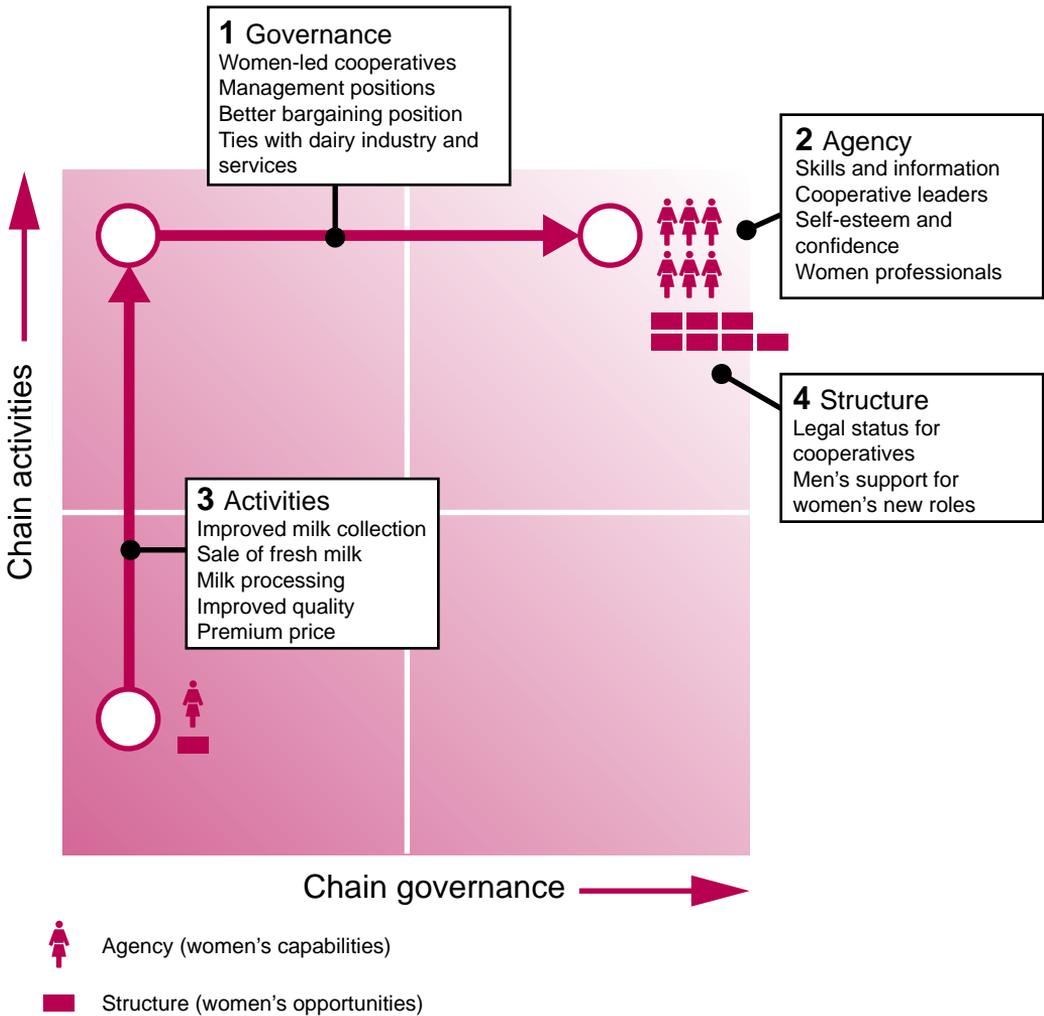


Figure 4.6. Changes in the dairy chain in Sri Lanka

The biggest changes took place in chain governance and activities. In a post-conflict setting the dairy chain turned out to offer an opportunity for women to earn a living and rebuild their livelihoods. The investment in building skills and confidence was a requirement. Changed attitudes towards women were the result. Giving the women-led cooperative legal status and linking it with the national cooperative consolidated women's positions and created a successful formula for others to imitate.

## Case 4.6 Training livestock health workers in Bangladesh

*Kohinoor Akhter*

There is already a queue when Bithi Rani opens her shop in the morning. One client says her cow is in heat: can Bithi please call someone to inseminate it? Another is worried about her new calf: it does not seem to be suckling properly. A third has come to thank Bithi: her animal has recovered and is again producing the milk on which the family depends.

Bithi is a livestock health worker in Ulipur *upazila*, in Kurigram district in northern Bangladesh. The chairman of the local government has provided her with an office and refrigerator to store vaccines and medicine. She has turned this room into a service centre and veterinary shop. She teaches her fellow villagers about dairy husbandry, diagnoses common diseases, dispenses medicines, sells feed, vaccinates animals and treats them for worms. She helps cattle owners maintain their vaccination and medical records. If she encounters a problem she cannot treat, she refers the case to a veterinarian.

A widow with three children, Bithi attended some high school and used to work as a specialist in small-animal husbandry with the Department of Livestock Services. But the salary was minimal, so she attended a training course with CARE Bangladesh to become a livestock health worker. CARE gave her a medical toolkit and a supply of record books, and introduced her to local farmers.

Business has gone well. Bithi provides a valuable service to the farmers in her village, and she can make a living from the fees she charges. That has given her confidence to take out a loan and open a service centre and shop. There she has space to meet clients, treat animals, and store supplies. She now earns BDT 10,500 (\$150) a month, making her completely independent. She saves enough to pay a total of BDT 1700 a month into two savings accounts and a life insurance policy.

### **Why women livestock health workers?**

Bithi is an example of a rare phenomenon in Bangladesh: a female livestock health worker. Gender divisions in rural Bangladesh can be sharp. Most veterinarians and village livestock health workers are men, and women farmers are reluctant to approach them for help. That left them without access to veterinary care and quality feed. Plus, Bangladesh has a massive population of cattle and other livestock – far more than the relatively few government veterinarians can service.

The answer: train villagers to provide basic livestock health services. And make sure that a good proportion of them are women.

## CARE's approach

That is the approach used by CARE Bangladesh's Strengthening the Dairy Value Chain project in north and northwestern Bangladesh. This is a large project that assists over 20,000 rural women to engage in various aspects of the dairy sector. Training and supporting village livestock health workers are a small but important part of this project.

CARE recruits trainees through posters to attract applicants and by asking communities to nominate candidates. Before starting the training, it makes sure the trainees understand the nature of the work. Some women hesitate to become health workers because they have to travel around the district to visit clients – and for women, riding a bicycle is not always culturally accepted.

The training lasts 17 days and covers various aspects of basic veterinary services for cattle. After the training, the new livestock health worker works closely with a veterinarian in the field.

The project has trained 168 livestock health workers, one-quarter of them women. This was fewer women than the hoped-for 50%: it has proved difficult to recruit enough women as trainees. Despite this, the women have proved a success as livestock health workers: they serve both male and female farmers, and local people are increasingly eager to consult them. They earn an average of \$90 a month – a good income in rural Bangladesh.

CARE supports the livestock health workers in various ways. It networks them with veterinarians, inseminators and sales representatives of pharmaceutical companies. It helps them start their own service centres and shops, and if necessary helps them get a loan to pay for a building. So far, 69 such centres have been started; four of the 42 women livestock health workers now operate one.

As they build their businesses, the livestock health workers begin to encounter new problems. They may need an assistant to look after the centre while they are out visiting clients. They need to learn accounting, record keeping and other business skills.

For the long term, local government support and recognition of female livestock health workers is important if they are to continue to provide services to their clients.

## Analysing the change

This case differs from the others in that women are not chain actors: they do not own the livestock. Rather, they are chain supporters, providing livestock health services to their communities. Their role is formalized, and they exchange information with other health workers, both men and women. They have gained confidence and recognition from local people (**agency**). Women health workers have become preferred service deliverers, and they get support from pharmaceutical firms that promote their services at fairs and provide them with items

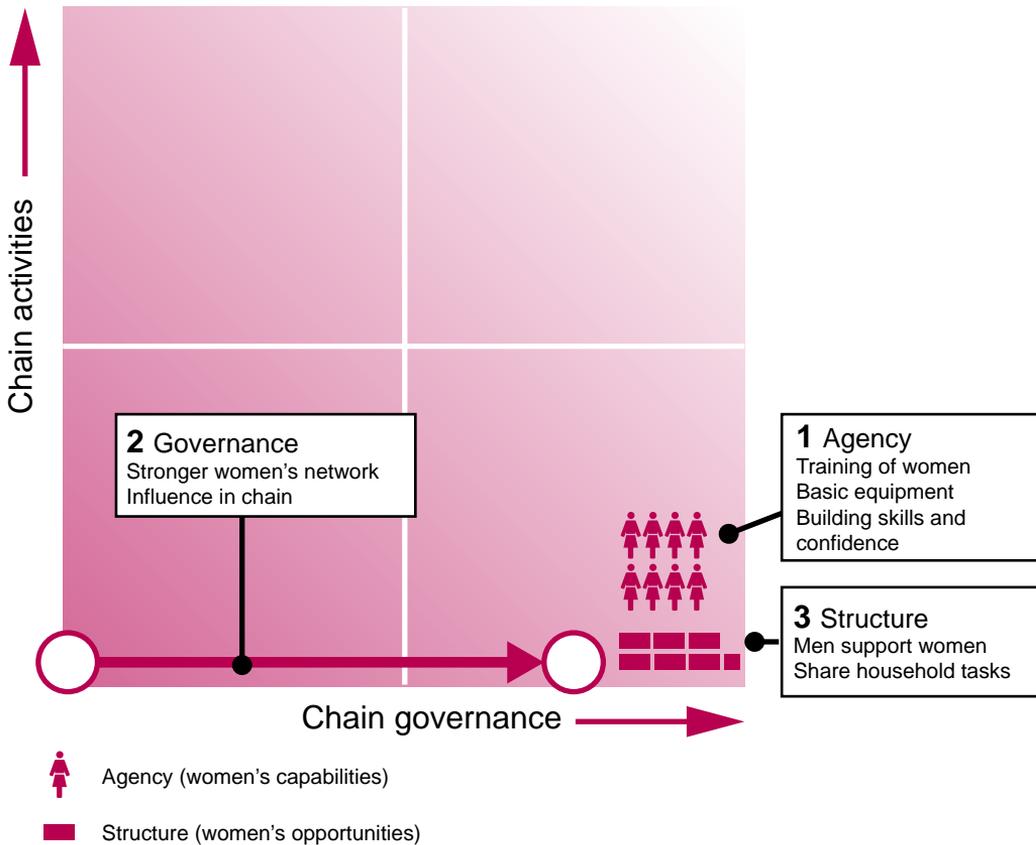


Figure 4.7. Changes in the provision of animal health services in Bangladesh

such as visiting cards and medicine bags. The women now play an influential role in the dairy sector and have increased their income considerably (**governance**).

Another major change has been in the attitude of men. Men now support their female family members in various ways: for example, husbands do the housework so their wives can attend meetings, and they accompany them on night-time visits, help with vaccination campaigns, and do some of the administration (**structure**).

The biggest change was in governance: women became recognized supporters to the livestock chain. As service providers, they help improve the chain performance. Some challenges remain. The number of women livestock health workers is small. One reason is the nature of the work: for women riding a bicycle is not yet always accepted. Also involving more women is difficult. Although the interventions aimed to train at least 50% women as livestock health workers, it managed only 25%. Aiming at more structural change led in this case to more resistance and reduced success.

Box 4.8 illustrates the experiences of a female livestock health worker.

### Box 4.8. Bulbully Begum: A dairy group leader in Bangladesh



Stirred into action by its mother's gentle nuzzles and licks, the newborn calf struggles to its feet. Its happy owner guides it to the cow's udder, and it begins to suckle.

"Another healthy calf!" smiles Bulbully Begum, who has come to check on the birth. "That is the tenth since we started with artificial insemination."

Bulbully has led a group of 32 women dairy farmers in Ramnagar, a village in Sariakandi upazilla, Bogra district, northwestern Bangladesh, for the last 3 years. Under her leadership, the members have boosted their milk production and started using artificial insemination to improve their cattle breed and their milk yields. Ten calves have now been born: eight female and two male.

Inseminating a cow used to cost BDT 300 (\$4.30). But if the cow does not conceive, the farmer has to call the inseminator again – an extra BDT 300. To encourage the members of her group to inseminate their cows, Bulbully negotiated lower prices with an inseminator: BDT 150 for the first insemination, and BDT 30 if another insemination proves necessary. Negotiating this deal was a big achievement: it was the first time Bulbully had ever been involved in such a discussion.

Bulbully's group meets every month to discuss challenges and make plans. They have made a lot of progress with their savings. Each member deposits BDT 20 (about \$0.30) every two weeks into the group's bank account. They use the money to support members who need an emergency loan for things like veterinary treatment, vaccination or bulk feed, and for other expenses.

Her reputation as a leader and negotiator has enhanced Bulbully's standing in the community. Her neighbours have begun to consult her on unrelated social issues, such as quarrels between families. She even helped mediate between two families and the police about an alleged abduction. That led people to urge her to stand for election as ward member for the local council.

Her public work has extended to her home life. She now makes the big decisions about the family finances and guides her children's education. When her husband fell ill, she mortgaged her property to raise the BDT 70,000 (\$1,000) needed to pay for his (successful) treatment. She plans to repay the loan by selling rice and jute, and by selling some cattle just before Eid al-Adha, a Muslim feast day when meat is in big demand and prices are highest.

*More information: Kohinoor Akhter, Care Bangladesh*

## Making more from milk

This chapter shows that building on women's traditional work in dairying can empower them economically and socially (as highlighted in Box 4.8). We can identify various advantages:

- Starting with traditional female tasks fits with women's responsibilities.
- Women do not need to own land in order to collect and trade milk or provide livestock health services.
- Although women take over men's roles in the dairy chain, they encountered little opposition. In Sri Lanka this was partly because the women had support their families after the civil war.
- The women made money from dairying and as livestock health workers. That benefited their families, as women tend to spend their income on the household and on education.
- Improving the economic position of women also gradually improves their social position and rights.
- The domestic consumption of milk increases, benefiting all family members, especially the children.
- Training villagers as livestock health workers improves the capacity of the trainees and improves the provision of services to animal owners and managers – many of whom are women. This improves the performance of the chain as a whole.

If we look at how and what kind of changes occurred we see a lot of similarities between the two main cases. Both projects described in the cases have been running for three years. Although in Bangladesh the women were supporters rather than actors in the chain, we see that in both Bangladesh and Sri Lanka women were able to add value to chain. Training was essential for women to start taking up roles higher up in the chain and to start providing services as livestock health workers. In the case of dairy the female-led cooperatives supported women in their confidence and also in the ability to make better deals (by bulking their output). Over time men and community members started to appreciate women taking up these new roles, and supported women to run their businesses.

Positive trends, then, but such changes take time. Not all women can become entrepreneurs, although their day-to-day activities can improve. Women continue to face constraints that hinder them from taking up new roles and to benefits from them. Also, that fact that women are permitted in leadership positions does not automatically mean that others appreciate and respect this. Nevertheless, we see that changes gradually occur, at least for some of the women. Their success benefits many more people, and helps to convince others, both men and women, that women can successfully perform activities higher up in the chain, provide services and take on leadership positions in the chain and in their communities.

## Conclusion

Women's traditional involvement in dairy farming makes it an easy entry point for promoting their role in value chains. In both the cases in this chapter, the starting point was the women's poverty, and the intervention was gender-specific. Financially needy households are more likely to allow their female members to participate in projects and training. The geographical setting is important too: where many small-scale dairy farmers live close together, it is easier to organize collective action and bring services to villages.

The cases illustrate that establishing formal linkages with the local authorities and private businesses increases the visibility of women in the dairy chain. Such linkages may be vital because, for example, the government is heavily involved in business, or to guarantee the provision of business services. In the Bangladesh case, the female livestock health workers were linked to the Department of Livestock Services, and pharmaceutical companies support the women livestock health workers – and in doing so, promote their own products. In Sri Lanka, women have taken leadership roles in their communities, and have gained respect for their contribution to their communities' development.

The cases show multiple advantages for women. But just because women are involved in dairying does not automatically mean they benefit. Before an intervention, it is important to know whether dairying is a viable business and has potential for expansion and to benefit women. That means analysing the value chain from a gender perspective. Oxfam GB did such an analysis in Sri Lanka, allowing it to target its intervention towards women-led cooperatives.

## Situating the arguments

In this chapter the main entry point for intervening in the dairy sector was **poverty reduction**. Dairy was perceived as easy entry point as women traditionally take care of the cattle and do the milking. In the Sri Lanka case, men are often absent, as many of them died during the civil war. Dairy farming was perceived as one of the few economic opportunities for women. Seeing potential economic benefits for women was an important reason for intervening in this particular setting. The argument that **targeting women presents new market opportunities as suppliers** is therefore also relevant.



## 4.4 Improving women's position through green agriculture

In many rural areas it is the women who do most of the farming, take care of animals, gather firewood and collect water. They depend on the environment for the survival of their families (Patel, 1996). As users and managers of the environment, they often have a close relationship with it, and they can play an important role in protecting it (UN Decade for Women 1995). Any environmental management policy should naturally take them into account (though few do).

Similarly, initiatives to address gender equity can use environmental management as their starting point. This chapter continues the theme of this section: building on women's current roles. In this case, it is the role of environmental caretaker. This chapter shows how green agriculture can improve gender equity, empower marginalized people, reduce poverty, and contribute to food security and sovereignty (Box 4.9).

Consumer demand for green products is rising worldwide, and such products can fetch a higher price than the equivalent grown with chemicals. That means green agriculture offers opportunities for farmers: they potentially can earn more per unit of output while spending less on inputs. They can also diversify their products and increase their quality, which in turn attracts higher prices. On the other hand producing green products can also entail relative losses (e.g., opportunity costs), as yields can be lower than in chemicals are used.

Where does gender come in? Traditionally, women act as caretakers – of children, animals, food or the environment. That means green agriculture is closely linked to these traditional roles. Also, green agriculture tends to be labour-intensive and use simple technologies. Although it is time-consuming, this does make it easier for women take up, as mechanized, chemical farming tends to be a man's world (Box 4.10).

This chapter contains two cases and several boxes:

- **Case 4.7, Natural rice farming in Indonesia**, tells how women have become empowered through a return to more organic ways of growing rice. It shows that a shift to more labour-intensive technology can lead to benefits for women.
- **Case 4.8, Organic vegetables in Guatemala**, is set in Mayan communities in western Guatemala. It illustrates an interesting mix of green agriculture, local markets and gender equity.

### Box 4.9. Green agriculture

“Green agriculture” is production methods that use few (or no) external inputs (high-yielding varieties, chemical fertilizers and pesticide and insecticide, equipment) and optimize the use of internal inputs (such as manure). It includes “organic”, “natural”, “bio”, “ecological”, “sustainable”, or “agro-ecological” agriculture. Although it is labour-intensive, it reduces farmers' risks and costs because they depend less on outside inputs. It is not merely a set of techniques; it is also about stimulating abilities and capacities of people, men and women.

### Box 4.10. Reframing “caretaker” roles

**Entry point.** Reframing the traditional role of rural women as a household caretaker to one of caretaker of business and the environment: becoming an environmental manager.

**Why do it?** Farming in an environmentally friendly way offers three types of benefits:

- It conserves the environment.
- It can improve farmers' incomes by reducing the cost of production and improving product quality.
- Coupled with a gender programme, it can promote gender equity. Helping women boost their economic activities expands their horizons in other aspects of society.

**How to do it?** Interventions must take women's situations into account (for example, respecting the restrictions placed on them) and move slowly and step-by-step.

We distinguish three types of interventions to support women in re-framing traditional roles:

- Organizing groups: women's, men's and mixed groups.
- Building capacity to raise awareness, knowledge, entrepreneurial skills and leadership.
- Better organized markets.

**When is it a good strategy?** The approach seems to be suitable:

- In societies recovering from conflict.
- In religious and conservative societies where women face a lot of constraints.

**Conditions for success.**

- Demand for organic or natural products.
- Working closely with the local community and the private sector, and sensitizing men to provide a clear vision of how the community will benefit.
- Women's access to land.
- Consideration of different entry points (economic and environmental), as starting with gender may be too sensitive.
- Green agriculture seen not as the goal, but rather a means for improving the situation of women and the value chain.

- **Box 4.11, Purwohadi: Husband of Suprati, a community organizer in Indonesia,** quotes a male villager who supports his wife's community work.
- **Box 4.12, A woman's farmer field school in Armenia,** describes how new production scheme combined with market access can be a powerful source of change.
- **Box 4.13, Structural problems in rural Guatemala,** outlines the extreme problems facing attempts to improve life for farmers in this country.

## Case 4.7 Natural rice farming in Java, Indonesia

*Intan Darmawati Supeno*

The Green Revolution ushered in big changes to rural Java. It introduced new, high-yielding, rice varieties, plus chemical fertilizers and pesticides, along with machinery such as tractors and threshers.

As rice became more commercialized, men took over more of the buying and selling. They also tended to own and operate the new equipment. All this reduced the involvement of women, leaving them with less influence over production and marketing. They were often left with time-consuming and backbreaking tasks such as transplanting and weeding.

Socially and politically, Javanese women traditionally have a lower status than men. They have few opportunities to voice their concerns, and little say in the big decisions.

But this is beginning to change. In four districts, Boyolali, Klaten, Kulon Progo and Gunung Kidul, women villagers are again becoming more involved in rice, and are taking on leadership roles in organizing, training and working with the local government. This is happening for a surprising reason: a renewed emphasis on a more environmentally friendly way of growing rice.

### **Natural farming**

LESMAN, a local NGO, promotes “natural farming” because many small-scale farmers can no longer afford to buy seed, chemicals, fuel and equipment. The prices of such inputs have risen over the years. LESMAN teaches the farmers how to plant traditional varieties, use compost instead of artificial fertilizer, and reduce their use of pesticides to a minimum.

LESMAN works with over 17,000 farmers in the four districts, organized into nearly 548 groups: 78 composed only of women, 243 of men, and 227 mixed. These groups are supported by 850 volunteer community organizers. These are villagers who run farmer field schools, strengthen organizations, raise awareness on gender issues, promote environmentally friendly farming, foster micro enterprises, and organize advocacy efforts.

The NGO supports the farmers in various ways: it uses farmer field schools to build their skills, helps them diversify their incomes by developing microenterprises, and engages in advocacy on subjects such as water, land, agricultural policy and government budget allocations.

### **A new role for women**

With less emphasis on purchased inputs, the opportunity for women and men to become involved in rice production has increased.

LESMAN pays close attention to ensuring that women have a say in decisions and can play a full part in activities. For example, it encourages women to take part in meetings by inviting individuals by name rather than issuing a general invitation. Meeting facilitators make sure that women have a chance to speak, and hold special meetings so they can get used to speaking in public. LESMAN started a network for women's groups spanning the four districts to strengthen their leadership abilities.

Getting the support of men is important. LESMAN encourages the women to tell their husbands and families about what is discussed at meetings. Community organizers make personal approaches to the men to raise their awareness. This has begun to change the relationships between husbands and wives: the husbands are doing more housework and taking care of the children; they support their wives as community leaders, and have come to regard them as equal partners in rice production.

### **Economic change, social change**

The farmers sell their rice through their own cooperative, Pasar Tani Alami (Natural Farmer Market), which checks the quality and markets the product through specialized market channels where it fetches a price premium. Household incomes from rice have nearly tripled. That has improved food security, raised living standards, and enabled families to pay for education and health care.

The women farmers have also seen big changes. More are now taking active part in the farmers' groups: in 2008, only one-tenth of the people attending meetings were women; in 2010, this was one-third. Through the farmer field schools, women have learned how to farm in an environmentally friendly way, how to plan their farm enterprise, and when and how to market their output. They now



### Box 4.11. Purwohadi: Husband of Suprati, a community organizer in Indonesia



“Before we got married, my wife used to stay in town, while I was in the village. Afterwards, she no longer belonged to her parents, but to her husband. From the beginning of our married life, we tried to support each other. We work for our children, so the most important things are how we can manage ourselves so at least one of us can take care of our children. If my wife goes out, I cook and sometimes I do the washing and cleaning too.

“I know that my wife is good at speaking, while I am not. I just realize and accept that. I feel comfortable and I’m very supportive to her so she can share something by her ability to talk. She shares her knowledge with the community that needs it, and she learns things from other communities too, like organic farming. So it is an exchange of knowledge. Other than that, we have nothing else to share. I do not forbid her to do anything, and I’ve no problem with the positive things she does.

“In our family, we always discuss and solve a problem together. My wife always tells me the things that happen in the activities she takes part in. And if she has a problem, we discuss it together and solve it together. I know all her activities and what happen there.

“In Javanese culture, men are seen as dominant, and women are submissive and weaker. But, in our lives, we do not always win. Like we are fishing, if we use a small worm as bait, we will only catch small fish. So there has to be an equality and harmony.

“Since my wife has become active and a leader, we know how to lobby the government. Before, we didn’t know that there are funds to support people. Now we know and we can get them. It gives a positive benefit for our communities.

“For me, it is important that more women in Indonesia take up such roles. If women have the ability, why not? I very much support women to take on such roles, because not all men can do it. And we men have to realize that.”

– Purwohadi, Kulon Progo, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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have more influence over the price they sell at. They have gained access to land, capital, information and financial services.

Now they can decide themselves what to do, the women enjoy their work more and have become more confident and enthusiastic. The number of women community organizers and leaders is increasing, and some have been elected as village chairpersons (Box 4.11).

### Analysing the change

After the Green Revolution, women were involved only in parts of rice production (planting, weeding and harvesting). Few did the milling and marketing. But this has changed. Natural farming gave women (and men) the opportunity to do more in production (such as seeding and composting) as well as tasks further along the chain, such as storage, quality selection and marketing – which attracts higher prices (**chain activities**).

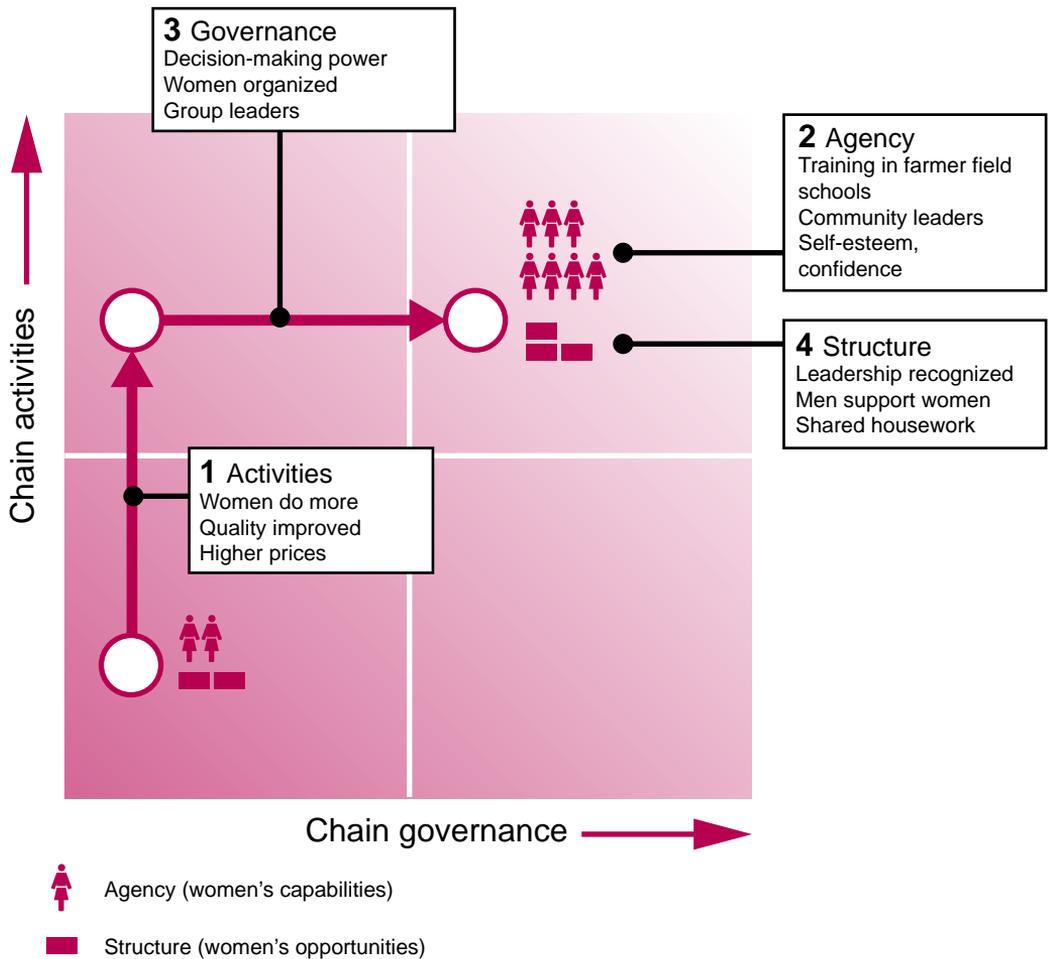


Figure 4.8. Changes in the rice chain in Indonesia

Although they are traditionally valued as household managers, women tend to be passive followers rather than leaders in the economy and community. Working in natural farming and taking part in farmer field schools and women's groups have increased their self-esteem and confidence. Women have become community leaders and lobbyists (**agency**).

The Green Revolution reduced women's influence over the rice chain. Women had no say about prices, what seed to plant, or other aspects of production and marketing. They owned neither land nor mills. This is changing. As part of a group, women can set prices, plan production, decide how much to store and how much to sell, and so on. They are becoming leaders of mixed groups as well as women-only groups (**chain governance**).

Javanese culture and the dominant religion constrain women from becoming leaders, and there are still many laws discriminating against women. Women's mobility is limited (for example, they cannot come home late without being accom-

panied by a man), and many do not own land. But Javanese culture is changing: it is slowly becoming more open for women, and women are now more easily accepted as leaders and recognized for their capabilities. At home, husbands have begun to recognize and value their wives more (**structure**).

In this case, women's involvement in natural rice farming supported their emancipation. LESMAN's gender-sensitive approach helped build their confidence and skills. The involvement and sensitization of men were also important. It is remarkable that there was hardly any change in structure. In this conservative setting changes go slow. LESMAN nevertheless found a way of reaching out to women and men, stimulating change step by step.



We saw in the case above how farmer field schools were important in training women. Box 4.12 gives an example of a similar approach in Armenia, in which members produce vegetables for niche markets. The story shows the value of quality production and access to markets.

#### **Box 4.12. A women's farmer field school in Armenia**

The Women Farmer Field School in Gargar, a village in the Lori province of Armenia, was established in 2004 with support from Green Lane Agricultural Assistance (a non-government organization) and an American-funded marketing project. Green Lane supports the group with technical assistance and advice on production and marketing.

The group produces high-value vegetables and herbs: it currently grows and sells over 35 different crops, from asparagus to zucchini. Plants collected in the wild account for about 10 percent of the food consumed in Lori and other mountainous areas in Armenia, so there is a danger of over-exploitation. The field school members grow wild edible plants, medicinal plants and herbs, helping to reduce the pressure on wild stocks.

Green Lane has helped the Gargar group (and other groups it supports) to develop niche markets for their products. It has established a small network of clients who regularly buy the group's products. This network includes embassies, international organizations, hotels, restaurants and other clients interested in high-quality ecological food. It relies on e-commerce tools, where producer groups can advertise their products and clients order by internet and email.

Green Lane's marketing team collects the crops from farms in Lori and other provinces, takes them to Yerevan, the Armenian capital, for sorting, packaging and delivery to buyers. This combination of appropriate production and enhanced market opportunities has given significant economic advantages to members of the Gargar field school and other farmer groups in Armenia.

*Source: Nara Yaralyan, and Nune Sarukhanyan, Green Lane Agricultural Assistance NGO, Armenia. [www.greenlane.am/documents/wfg.pdf](http://www.greenlane.am/documents/wfg.pdf)*

## Case 4.8 Organic vegetables: An opportunity for Mayan women in Guatemala

*Rony Aguilar, Pastoral de la Tierra, ptierrasm@itelgua.com*

San Marcos, western Guatemala, 1996: the civil war had ended, and it was time to rebuild. There was a long list of problems: land abandoned to weeds, lost productivity, a lack of basic services, broken communities and families, chronic malnutrition, psychological and social problems, unemployment, deforestation and a shattered economy.

The Catholic Church's Pastoral de la Tierra (Pastoral Land) programme studied the situation and worked with local people, most of whom belong to the Maya Mam, one of Guatemala's many ethnic groups. It started by trying to restore the war-devastated communities, developed their leadership skills, and identified various potential economic activities – mostly in agriculture.

Coffee was one of these. But the study showed that it was mainly a man's responsibility; women were tied close to home by their domestic responsibilities. Recognizing that women and men had different needs, the programme organized separate groups for men and women. It trained the men in organic coffee production and diversification into other crops.

For the women, the initial approach was to help them recognize their rights and get organized as groups. The women said that their biggest problem was ensuring their families had enough to eat. So the programme trained them how to organize themselves to grow organic vegetables for home consumption. With little land, production had to be intensive: the women now cultivate a wide range of vegetables on plots that average only 250 m<sup>2</sup>.

The yields are good, and the women grow a surplus. Pastoral de la Tierra and CEDECO, an NGO based in Costa Rica, have helped them create community markets and sales outlets so they can sell their produce direct to consumers – so maximizing their profit. With the support of the local governments, they have set these outlets up in Santa Lucía Talux, the nearest town.

These markets allow the women to sell their surplus produce as well as to develop their business skills. They are now able to respond to market prices and have a clear business vision, and make decisions according to the situation. They have gained self-esteem, and some have become leaders in their communities, passing on their knowledge and attitudes to other local women.

Fifteen years ago, it was very rare to see women participating actively in community life. Now, they are much more involved. They have expanded into other economic spheres, such as savings and credit cooperatives. Their daughters now have much better educational opportunities and access to land than their mothers used to.



But there are still bottlenecks.

- Mothers with young children find it difficult to combine childcare with their production, marketing and community activities. Women with older children, and those who have none, face fewer such problems.
- Men's attitudes change slowly, and society is conservative. Some men appreciate the women's work, but they may fall under the influence of their more macho friends. Continual effort is needed to sensitize men to the women's valuable economic role.
- It is the women who must usually bear the family's household expenses. Men must recognize that both men and women should take on this responsibility.

The situation is complicated by other factors: the demand for land by local people, disputes over land ownership, the threat that local people will have to leave their plots to make way for a big hydroelectricity project, and young people's lack of interest in farming.

### Analysing the change

The first change was in **chain activities**. Before, women did not grow or sell vegetables; now they grow some vegetables to eat, and sell the rest on the local market. Access to credit (exclusively given to women) helped them to set up the value chain. It is the women themselves who decide what to produce, how much to sell, and at what price. They keep financial records so they can plan and monitor their activities. They also manage the local market where they sell the vegetables (**chain governance**). Women's involvement in markets and the training they received have increased the women's self-esteem (**agency**).

Although women now play a bigger role in community meetings, they still do not make the decisions in such settings. In their households, though, they now decide on things like their children's education. They also have a say on the NGOs'

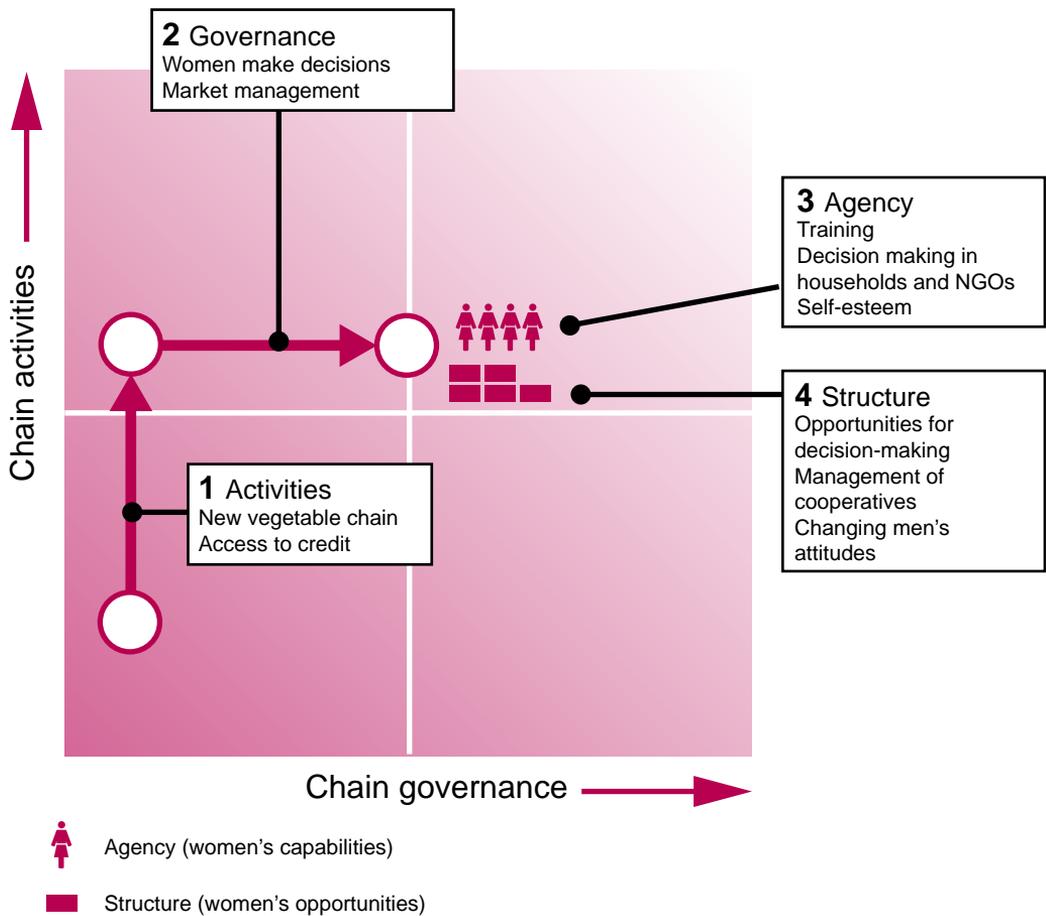


Figure 4.9. Changes in the vegetables chain in Guatemala

activities in the community. Women start to pass on their knowledge and attitudes to other local women. Now women are much more involved in community life, and take up management tasks in saving and credit cooperatives. This is quite a change. But men's attitudes change more slowly (**structure**).

Setting up a vegetable chain in a post-conflict and conservative setting was challenging. Bottlenecks are still there. What this case shows is that change is possible, even at a structural level. It also shows that changes take time (for example, finding the right entry-point or even the right chain), and continuous efforts are needed for women's emancipation and rebuilding livelihoods.

Box 4.13 describes the urgency for change and the need to recognize gender inequalities in rural Guatemala.

### Box 4.13. Structural problems in rural Guatemala

Pastoral de la Tierra is a branch of the Diocese of San Marcos. Created in 1992, it tackles the agrarian problems that face peasants in Guatemala such as access to land and resources. Some 57% of the farmland is controlled by just 22 families, while 22% of the land is worked by 92% of the farmers, who are small-scale and mostly indigenous. Along with 36 years of armed conflict, this gap results in many economic, social, cultural and environmental problems. Human rights are neglected, rural unemployment is high, and inequalities between men and women are big.

Pastoral de la Tierra's strategy is to focus on agro-ecology and lobbying. Organizing communities is vital to deal with food insecurity and sovereignty, and to encourage entrepreneurship to create employment. The idea is to stimulate the abilities and capacities of both men and women.

Efforts to reduce social and economic gaps are ineffective if we ignore gender inequalities. That means promoting the position of women in society. Structural change is needed to stimulate communities to solve their own problems.

*More information: Rony Aguilar, Pastoral de la Tierra*



## Green agriculture and benefits for women

Green agriculture is a relatively easy entry point for addressing gender inequalities because it builds on women's normal "caretaking" tasks. Guatemala is recovering from conflict, and Kulon Progo in Java is very conservative. Such conditions make it important to look for interventions that are workable given the local culture. As in other chapters, women's opportunities increase when they organize in groups, and their capacity is built. What stands out in this chapter is the need for better-organized markets. There has to be a demand for green products, as well as the potential to produce them! Let us look at some of the advantages of green agriculture:

- Marketing products as "organic" can increase the selling price.
- Green agriculture can help farmers diversify their products and spread their risks.
- It makes farming more ecologically sustainable.
- Villages that go organic can improve their reputation, especially if the government recognizes their organic status.
- Increasing women's income usually improves their families' quality of life, health and children's educational opportunities.

In both cases it was not easy for women to be treated equally to men. As with other approaches in this chapter, men can block the process if they do not realize the benefits to them, their families and the community. Even men who realize this may be pressured by other men to revert to a more conservative, male-dominant stance. Also it is not always easy for women to change and to take up more roles (e.g., in productive work or in politics), it can also be that the burden becomes too high for women (e.g., when their reproductive or social tasks are not shared with men). We have to be aware that adding value does not automatically benefits women, and does not change women's position.

### Conclusions

Green agriculture offers opportunities for women. The aim is improving women skills and their position in the household and communities. The gender-specific interventions accept traditional division of labour and responsibilities. This makes it easier to realize change and resistance is expected to be minimal. Green agriculture can, however, be a challenge and can take quite some time and investment. Green agriculture by itself may not be enough to trigger structural changes. This is why we see it as a means to develop the value chain and enhance gender equity and the self determination of women, and not as a goal in itself.

### Situating the arguments

A number of arguments are particularly relevant for this chapter. For example, by building on women's traditional role as caretakers, women present **new market opportunities as suppliers** of green products. This is clearly a business argument.

Recognizing women's specific needs and constraints is another important starting-point for the interventions.

Women lacking choices is an important feature of poverty. Therefore, **poverty reduction** is also a relevant argument for implementing this chapter's strategies.



## 4.5 Conclusions

Here we look back at the cases and experiences presented in the four chapters in this section. To understand the interventions described here and to draw lessons, it is helpful to distinguish between three objectives that can be reached by building on women's traditional roles and typically female tasks.

- **Chain performance:** improving performance of the whole chain and adding value by increasing women's involvement in new activities that are further along in the chain, or by involving women in providing services.
- **Women's empowerment:** improving the performance of and power held by women in the chain, household or community.
- **Poverty reduction and rebuilding livelihoods:** supporting women in vulnerable contexts to earn money and build their self-esteem.

These objectives are linked to the different arguments presented in this book:

- The business argument and chain performance,
- The social justice argument and women's empowerment, and
- Poverty alleviation and rebuilding livelihoods.

**Business: Addressing gender to improve chain performance.** We have seen ample evidence that professionalizing women's work and supporting women in taking up new roles in the value chain contribute to chain performance. Women have become better in what they do (producing better quality); in many cases they have also scaled up production (also through collective marketing). We see that women groups have been linked to higher value or better organized markets. They have become more preferred suppliers of products and services. Bulking output and improving quality attract other businesses and service providers, contributing to a more professional value chain and local economic development. The economic hub created in Kenya by a growing livestock market and attracting buyers and service providers from other places (Case 4.3) is a good example.

We see also that in most cases women gained a degree of control over the value chain, being involved in negotiating prices and establishing direct linkages with more attractive buyers.

Improving chain performance was often not the ultimate goal of the interventions, but more the means through which women can earn a better income, rebuild their livelihoods and reduce poverty.

**Social justice: Contributing to women's empowerment.** Starting by building on tradition improves the conditions under which women are included in a value chain. Responding to and sometimes removing traditional barriers that women face, such as little freedom to travel, illiteracy and no ownership of land or animals, help women to take up economic activities and become visible in the value chain. Women are now more recognized for their productive roles and are able to increase and diversify their incomes. That benefits them and their families.

It is mainly the women's practical needs that are met through these interventions, and not their strategic needs (see chapter 3). However, removing barriers, training and recording successes mean that women are gradually perceived differently and are empowered, both economically and socially. Women take up leadership roles and have more to say in the value chain, their households and their communities.

How far does building on tradition really change the control of women over income and assets? This is still unknown in most of our cases. We can say that the value chains and roles discussed in this section are relatively easy entry-points to trigger change. Especially in more vulnerable settings where men are absent, or women have little education or assets, supporting women to access markets and building their capacity has succeeded in empowering them.

**Poverty alleviation: Gender equality for rebuilding livelihoods.** The cases in this chapter appear to have a strong focus on rebuilding livelihoods, which is partly explained by the settings in which the interventions take place. Building on tradition seems to be particularly suitable in post-conflict, post-disaster and abandoned areas. When people flee from disaster or conflict, their lives change rapidly and dramatically, and continue to change (March et al. 1999: 43). There are often few entry-points available for men and women to earn money. In emergency situations, interventions matching the realities (e.g., building on what women already do or are familiar with) make sense.

In marginalized areas, men often look for jobs outside the villages, leaving the women behind. Sometimes their absence creates space for women to take up new economic responsibilities. In other cases, where men are still around but both men and women are marginalized, the urge for women to contribute to the family income is also high. These responsibilities do not automatically translate into opportunities: new responsibilities are often simply added to other daily tasks, increasing their workload. Also, it is not certain that they will control the extra income they generate.

Building on tradition as a way to reduce poverty is also often a starting point, or can be a positive side-effect. Women tend to reinvest a big part of the money they earn in their families (for example educating their children) and communities (for example building public mills, as we saw in the case of shea butter in Guinea). Also women are better able to address their basic needs. For example, in the Bangladesh and Sri Lanka cases, one of the priorities was to promote milk consumption by family members.

### **Key interventions**

The experiences described in this chapter show similarities in the combinations of interventions used to address gender inequality. We here list the key interventions that support the broad strategy of this chapter: mitigating resistance by building on tradition.

### **Combine access to markets with a solid capacity-building programme**

Capacity building must take into account the reality that women find themselves in. For example in Indonesia, women cannot go home late, so meetings were held in the afternoon. To overcome inequalities, some training was designed for women only.

Capacity building raises women's (and men's) awareness, knowledge, entrepreneurial and leadership skills, amongst others. It can also enable them to add value in terms of production, processing and marketing. This section depicts many instances where women were illiterate (like those in Guatemala). The intervention here helped them learn to speak, write and read Spanish, the language they need to trade. They are now also more aware of their rights and some are now making decisions and taking part in politics. Some are inspired to become leaders, and other women want to copy them.

In building women's capacity, a market outlet is crucial. The market may not be immediately available, or there may be constraints in supplying it. In Kenya, the answer was to bring the market closer to the women. In Guatemala, the women themselves built a sales outlet nearby. In Indonesia, they organized sales through their own cooperative.

### **Strengthening women's organizational capacity**

Collective aggregation and marketing can create many benefits for women and increase their negotiating power within a chain. Collectively women can access services such as finance more easily.

To become a strong farmer organization, it is important that women are confident and have leadership skills.

Our cases include several women-led cooperatives and organizations, as well as mixed groups. When women have few skills and little confidence, it can be better to start with women-only groups, before mixing women with men. This avoids a situation where men dominate the groups.

### **Sensitization of men and women**

It is important that men and women in the household and in the chain accept women's potential roles. In some cases, in time the attitudes of some men changed, but that this process can be very slow. Some husbands support their wives; others do not. One woman in Sri Lanka remarked that even though she had received training on dairying, her husband managed everything; she merely did the cleaning and other menial tasks.

In the case of Guatemala we saw that men can block the process if they do not realize the benefits to them, their families and the community. Even men who realize this may be pressured by other men to revert to a more conservative, male-dominant stance.

## **Women's ownership of organizations, trade and equipment**

Ownership by women is key. In dairying, who owns the cattle determines who can perform various functions further along in the chain – and who benefits. It also determines whether women get to keep the money. Ownership of livestock differed from case to case. In our Sri Lanka case, women were the main owners, while in Bangladesh most of the cattle belonged to the men.

The case of shea in Guinea illustrates the importance of owning equipment to avoid others taking over when shea becomes a lucrative business.

## **Embedding activities and services in the community and private sector**

Establishing formal linkages with local authorities and private businesses increases the visibility of women in value chains. Such linkages may be vital because, for example, the government is heavily involved in business, or to guarantee the provision of business services. In the Bangladesh case, the female livestock health workers were linked to the Department of Livestock Services. In Sri Lanka, women have taken leadership roles in their communities, and have gained respect for their contribution to local development.

Some of the interventions contribute to a particular dimension in our four-dimensional matrix. For example, capacity building often leads to increasing women's capability and confidence (agency). Moreover it helps women to perform well in a chain (activities). Organizing women is a way of getting more influence in a chain (governance). Embedding activities in the local community and with private sector helps women to become recognized partners. Sensitizing men and women is linked to changing the structure in which women are embedded, opening up opportunities for change.

## **Lessons**

Let us draw some lessons from the evidence presented in this section.

### **In vulnerable societies women are highly risk-averse**

Women are risk-averse, especially when the context is particularly vulnerable. Therefore, it makes sense to start the process of change by building upon women's traditional activities and roles that fit their current position and capacity, instead of investing in new roles. Building on something that is already out there is likely to make things better (for these women things cannot get much worse). In case of failure the damage will be relatively small and it does not put the community at risk.

Women's involvement in traditional activities is often for women a way to spread their risk. So, diversification of risk is a starting point. Diversification remains important higher up in the chain (diversify markets, products, etc.).

### **Ownership is important**

There is a risk that men take over a chain activity when women become successful. Compared to male-dominated chains, the kinds of activities described in this section are low-risk: men are less interested in taking up traditionally female roles. Apart from these activities not fitting traditionally male roles, it is the women, not the men, who control these arenas. Women's control in traditional commodities is generally high (but not guaranteed!). Most activities are done solely by women and thought to generate a supplementary income. The woman has a certain level of control because she is the money-earner. If women generate their own money, men are less likely to take this money, especially when it is used for supporting the family.

If women start moving up in the chain or take up other roles it is important that ownership remains with them. Enabling women to remain in control in the longer term requires them to build their management capacity right from the beginning.

### **Mobility and access to land**

Benefiting more from traditional roles and responsibilities requires that some barriers (both cultural and physical) are removed. There are a number of constraints that hinder women from overcoming distance, in terms both of kilometres and in terms of the distance that women feel. Breaking such barriers is important. A first step is to recognize the barriers and to take them as a starting-point. So, for example if women think of markets as distant, bringing the markets (and services) to the women is the way to go. A second step is to work on removing barriers, enabling women to overcome such distance.

The lack of access to land is also an important constraint for women. Women are generally not the landowners; or the available land may not be suitable for agriculture. Where landholdings are small, green agriculture may be an option.

### **Women's groups**

Women often get together: in social groups, for harvesting, or for marriages and funerals. Groups are also natural in some cultures. Moreover, groups are often obligatory to access many types of services, including credit.

Collective approaches to access markets are common among poor women in rural areas. Women's traditional roles provide little income as they operate in very small, marginal markets. Working as a group, they can collectively market their products. Doing so also builds their confidence, which they need to access markets and manage activities. Women may also decide to produce their products collectively. If so, it is important to have mechanisms that benefit them according to how much they work. In the case of poultry in India (Case 4.4) women decided to pay themselves a wage.

Groups also address the issue of mobility. Women who can easily move within their community may not be able to go to a nearby market. But in groups they may be able to go anywhere.

For women, working in groups is normal and accepted. This contributes to a situation where women-only groups are often preferred to mixed or male-dominated groups. The involvement of men requires a lot of sensitization. It is important that men understand the role of women in a chain, and reflect on how both can work together.

### **Involvement of public and private stakeholders**

Building on traditional roles creates a change in the households and societies that women and men live in. It is important to embed the change on different levels. Sensitization of men is not enough; also local authorities and business need to be sensitized. They have to understand how addressing gender also helps the community.

### **Profits beyond household**

It is not only the women and their households that benefit from the strategies described in this chapter. The community where they live also benefits. Sometimes this is because of social structures, such as in Ghana, where women use community-owned land. Women reinvest part of their money into the communities. Benefits to the communities, not only for individual households, may be the reason for men to accept the empowerment of women.

### **The household remains a black box**

Although we can observe changes in perceptions and in how tasks are divided between men and women, we know little about what really happens in the households.

### **Linking value chain and gender**

Poverty reduction is often a starting point. This is both about value chain development and addressing gender issues. There is a synergy between the two approaches. In this section the starting point is activities or roles that are already in place. The issue is that without intervention women are not able to benefit more from these activities. If women can benefit more from what they were already doing on a small scale and get access to better markets, changes occur both in the chain and in gender relations. The two approaches are not always combined from the beginning. It is a process of learning by doing. The focus also can change over time. Depending on the people and institutions that need to be involved, benefits for the community or for women may be emphasized.

### **Who is included?**

The strategies in this section focus on poor women, but not all women are included, and not all benefit equally. There are different ways of prioritizing women. Often the number of women that an intervention can reach is an important starting point. Working in groups is often preferred.

Cultural constraints may limit the women's possibilities to do these kinds of activities and benefit from interventions, as we have seen in the case of livestock health workers in Bangladesh.

### **Upscaling**

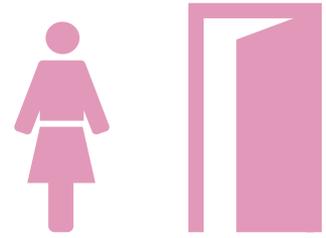
Building on traditional roles often starts with small groups of women, but numbers may grow rapidly. Some models can be replicated easily, and women may share their experiences with a lot of other women. Because of this ability to draw in other women, the impact of these kinds of strategies is large.

Leadership is an important catalyst for change. But it is important for the leadership comes from inside.



# 5

## Creating space for women



*Main contributors: Angelica Senders, Rhiannon Pyburn, Rozemarijn Apotheker, Innocent Matabishi, Lillian M. Mkony, Janet Nyaoro, Emma Saavedra, Gizachew Sisay and Mieke Vanderschaeghe*

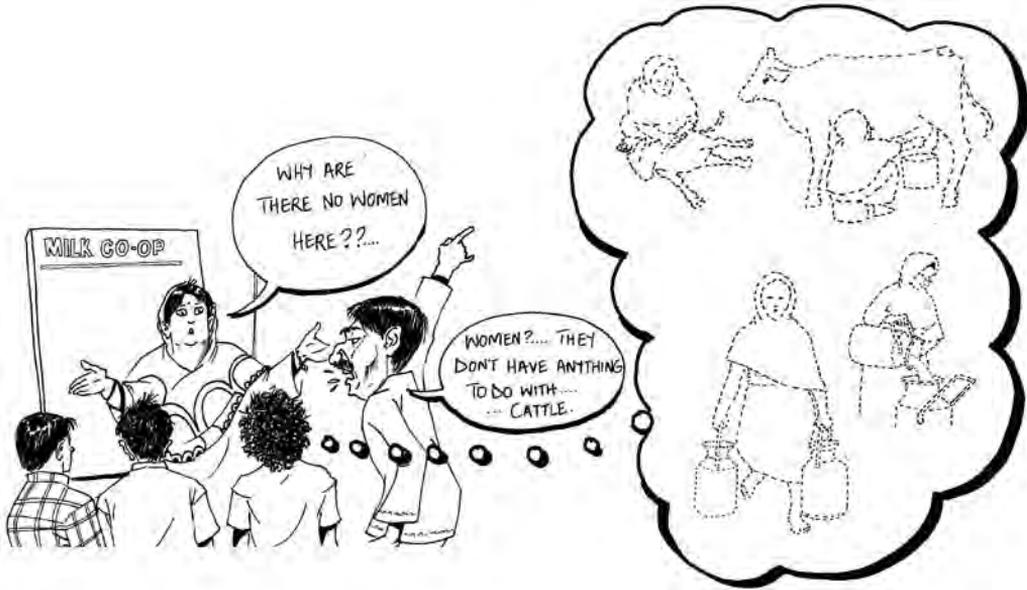
In Chapter 4 we described strategies that support women in traditional roles, with the idea of mitigating resistance from their communities. This chapter looks at a more radical approach: it describes how women can break into male-dominated chains, and how to become successful female entrepreneurs. We call this creating space.

This strategy focuses on opening up positions in a value chain to women. These positions may be generated by introducing new technologies, through market tactics, or by promoting women's visibility in chains where men play the prominent roles.

This strategy faces several, intertwined obstacles. One is access to agricultural technologies that make new practices possible: ploughing, improved seeds, fertilizers, harvesting, marketing, and so on. But access to these new technologies is not gender-neutral. Because women tend not to be the owners of land or other material assets, it is difficult for them to get credit for buying seed and fertilizer, for example. They often have limited education and are unable to join producer groups. That restricts their exposure to labour-saving technologies and makes it hard for them to add value to their products (Wakhungu 2010, Boodhna and IIED 2011).



*Figure 5.1. Creating space focuses on producers and processors in the value chain*



For women to overcome these obstacles, it has to be easier for them to get educated and to obtain new technology. Local and national legislation may need to be changed. Community-driven approaches, improved extension services, technical assistance and capacity building can help women become better producers and link to markets, so transforming their farming activities into business ventures.

This chapter is divided into two subchapters:

**Chapter 5.1: Positioning and engaging women in male-dominated chains.** This subchapter looks at how women can begin to work in chains that are dominated by men. We examine three cases where new technology and an appreciation of women's work have made this possible. Sensitization, appreciation and introducing new chain activities for women often go hand in hand. In Rwanda and Ethiopia, a range of interventions – covering awareness, policy, law, training, organization, technology and marketing – enabled women to start keeping bees and making honey. In Nicaragua, women already played an important but invisible role in the dairy industry. Here, a series of meetings was enough to raise awareness of their roles and the profile of women in the value chain.

**Chapter 5.2: Female entrepreneurship.** The second subchapter looks at the dynamics of female entrepreneurship to understand how women can become successful and visible entrepreneurs. How can women be encouraged to take up their own businesses, and how can they be successful? We consider cases from Bolivia and Tanzania, where individual women or groups have become entrepreneurs.

## 5.1 Positioning and engaging women in male-dominated chains

Most agricultural value chains in developing countries are dominated by men. This means that men are visible, and it is men who earn the money. There are several reasons for this.

- Men tend to **own the land** used in agricultural production.
- They also tend to control the machines, tools and other **means of production** needed to generate income.
- They are **mobile**, so they have access to information and markets. By contrast, women tend to be more restricted to their homes due to their household responsibilities (childcare, household chores etc.).
- Men typically **represent** the family to the outside world. It is usually men who engage in farmer organizations and forums where traders, producers and wholesalers come together to make deals.

As a result, men tend to control and dominate markets, especially those with high-value commodities (such as coffee, honey, cocoa, livestock, cotton and tea) or large volumes (rice, maize, sorghum, etc.). Women, by contrast, tend to be relegated to much smaller local and retail markets, subsistence produce, low-value and low-volume items (such as chickens and eggs) and perishable commodities (such as backyard vegetables and fruits). These commodities have limited economies of scale for translating into business opportunities.

But even where men dominate high-value commodities, women contribute, often substantially or predominantly, to their production and processing. But there is a catch: despite all this work, women are not regarded as “farmers” or value chain actors. They tend not to be represented in farmer organizations, and are not considered “economic actors” in efforts to develop value chains.

How to position women as equal actors in male-dominated chains? That depends on the chain in question. This chapter examines chains where the barriers for women are relatively low and the opportunities high. Issues like land ownership and mobility do not play a big role in these chains. Rather, women are invisible or excluded from chain activities because of societal norms or low self-esteem.

A first step is to make the women’s current contribution visible, and to help them take on new activities in the chain. It also means ensuring they have equal power to make decisions at all levels: in the family, household, organization and community. Playing an economically appreciated role contributes to their social status. The cases below show how this has led to women taking leadership positions that were previously dominated by men.

We present three cases:

- **Case 5.1, Women and bees? Impossible!** illustrates how changes in Rwandan government policy, together with the introduction of new technology and

## Box 5.1. Supporting women in male-dominated chains

**Entry point.** To position women better in male-dominated chains: making sure that they are visible and have economic decision-making power.

**Why do it?** Women already do much of the work in many male-dominated value chains. By making their contributions explicit, women gain opportunities and are able to improve their abilities and practices. That in turn allows both socio-economic emancipation of these women and improvements in chain activities. When more actors are economically viable and are able to improve their business in the chain, a chain becomes more robust. The involvement of women adds a new dynamic and diversity to the organizations and businesses affected.

**How to do it?** We distinguish several types of interventions to support women working in male-dominated value chains. These interventions often reinforce one another:

- **Recognize the contributions** of women in a value chain. A value chain analysis can aid discussion about the participation, or possible future participation, of women with all stakeholders, and make that participation visible.
- **Sensitize** men, women, communities, governments, companies, etc. and facilitate joint efforts among these actors.
- Involve **women in cooperatives or producer groups** and **build women's capacities** in business, literacy, technology, leadership, finance, etc.
- Introduce new **services and technologies** that are women-friendly to upgrade chain activities.

**When is it a good strategy?** The approach is particularly suitable:

- When land ownership is not affected and when high-value inputs or other barriers that might constrain women are not required.
- Where activities can easily be done by women (one case in this section talks about women's "dislike" of climbing trees), and that do not increase the overall work burden, bearing in mind women's many other responsibilities.

**Conditions for success.**

- Making women's contributions to the chain visible, and building women's confidence for joint decision-making on chain activities and spending.
- Changing laws, rules, statutes, etc. to allow women to take up certain positions in a value chain or cooperative. In some cases this may include land ownership.
- Sensitizing men and communities on the benefits of women's participation and the risks of excluding them.

women's empowerment, improved the position of women, boosted production and improved honey quality.

- **Case 5.2, "Women don't climb trees": Beekeeping in Ethiopia**, shows how women became successful producers in a chain once dominated by men and inefficient technologies. Changes at several levels improved the position of women economically and in society, while also improving honey quality and quantity.

- **Case 5.3, Making women dairy farmers visible**, discusses how women's contributions to the dairy chain in Nicaragua were made more visible. That gave them greater access to income, decision-making and cooperative membership.

Several boxes illustrate additional experiences where women have become more recognized and/or integrated into male-dominated chains:

- **Box 5.2, Amsal Endale: A beekeeper in Ethiopia**, profiles a woman who has become a leader of her beekeeping group.
- **Box 5.3, Gender sensitive payment systems**, describes efforts to feminize a value chain by marketing coffee as "made by women" and paying women a premium for their work. This box covers the payment process. (Chapter 7 returns to the theme of "made by women" labels and presents the two cases Café Femenino and Con Manos de Mujer in more depth.)
- **Box 5.4, Men's coffee, women's bananas and vanilla**, shows why it is important to understand the role of women and make sure they also benefit in efforts to upgrade product quality.
- **Box 5.5, Developing the cashew value chain in Benin**, describes how getting organized enabled women to improve the cashew chain and develop their own businesses.

## Case 5.1 Women and bees? Impossible! Honey in Rwanda

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Just ten years ago, women were not allowed anywhere near a beehive in Rwanda. But now, in an irony as sweet as their product, women are becoming increasingly important players in the honey value chain.

Beekeeping used to be a man's job. Local people feared that the bees would stop making honey – or even abscond in a swarm – if a woman came near the hive during her monthly period. So the men would collect the honey and bring it back to the house for processing. They squeezed the honey out of the honeycombs with their hands, and poured it into bottles for use in traditional medicine, to be given to children as a treat, or sold to breweries to ferment into local beer.

Productivity was low: the traditional hives made from hollow logs or bamboo produce relatively little honey as the bees have to put a lot of energy into making the honeycomb. It is hard to harvest the honey, and a lot gets spilled.

But the potential was there. By introducing new types of hives and processing techniques, it ought to be possible to increase quality and productivity. Improving marketing would enable farmers to make more money from their bees. And beekeeping was an ideal activity for women and the poor: it does not require a lot of investment; it involves less hard work and takes less time than ploughing a field or keeping cattle. The hive can be close to the house: that makes it easy to supervise and means beekeeping does not interfere with childcare and housework. Honey is easy to store, and is a welcome supplement to the family's diet as well as a source of income.

### **Pieces in a jigsaw puzzle**

As the Rwandan government and development agencies were considering development strategies, they realized that beekeeping offered a good opportunity to fight poverty and empower women at the same time. A variety of pieces were needed to put the jigsaw puzzle together.

**Sensitization on gender equity and equality.** The new government that took power after the horrors of the 1994 genocide placed great emphasis on women's rights. It wanted to help the many widows, and women whose husbands were in prison, to feed their families. It wanted to empower women as full members of the society. It spread this message through workshops, training courses and media campaigns, leading a change in general attitudes towards women and their roles.

**Changes in law.** Women's rights are enshrined in the Rwandan constitution, adopted in 2003. This provides a framework for laws and policies that make it illegal to discriminate against women, enabling women to participate in all kinds

of economic and social activities. In 2008, a new cooperative law was put into force, recommending and encouraging Rwandans to form cooperative organizations. Many cooperatives have bylaws that encourage women to join and take on leadership positions.

**Coordinating policy.** With government encouragement, SNV, a Dutch development organization, became the catalyst of development within the honey value chain. It organized various other organizations – government, non-government and private sector – to draw up a strategic plan to guide their activities for 2007–11. This strategic plan put a strong emphasis on including women and young people in honey development activities. SNV is now helping develop a national programme to coordinate activities into the future. All the major organizations involved in beekeeping meet regularly at national and district levels.

**Strengthening associations.** Many beekeepers already belonged to associations, but these tended to be weak. SNV helped them get registered, and trained them in entrepreneurship and cooperative management, with an emphasis on women's participation.

**Improving technology.** The government provided cooperatives with modern hives and processing equipment and trained them how to use them. That encouraged individual beekeepers and cooperatives to invest in their own equipment. To guarantee quality, the Rwanda Bureau of Standards inspects the honey and certifies it. SNV and UNIFEM (the United Nations Development Fund for Women) supported training for women in beekeeping.

**Improved marketing.** Exhibitions were an important way to help honey producers to display their products, find buyers, and learn about the market. The cooperatives bulk their members' honey and sell it to wholesalers, breweries, retailers or consumers. SNV and its partners train the cooperative members in entrepreneurship, marketing and credit.

### **Creating space for women**

Women's involvement in beekeeping has increased dramatically. Women now make up between one-fifth and one-third of the members of the beekeeping cooperatives – up from none at all just 10 years ago. Some have even made it into management positions in the cooperatives, though their numbers are still low: just 1% of such positions are occupied by women. But those cooperatives where women are involved in management tend to be the best-performing.

### **Analysing the change**

In this case, Rwandan women began working in an existing value chain, and changes in technology and laws made honey production more profitable, also for women. The first thing to change was the societal **structure** – the laws and cooperative rules as well as the technologies that were available. Workshops and media campaigns built capacity and the women's **agency**. Later, more as an impact than an intervention, women got represented in the cooperatives, so

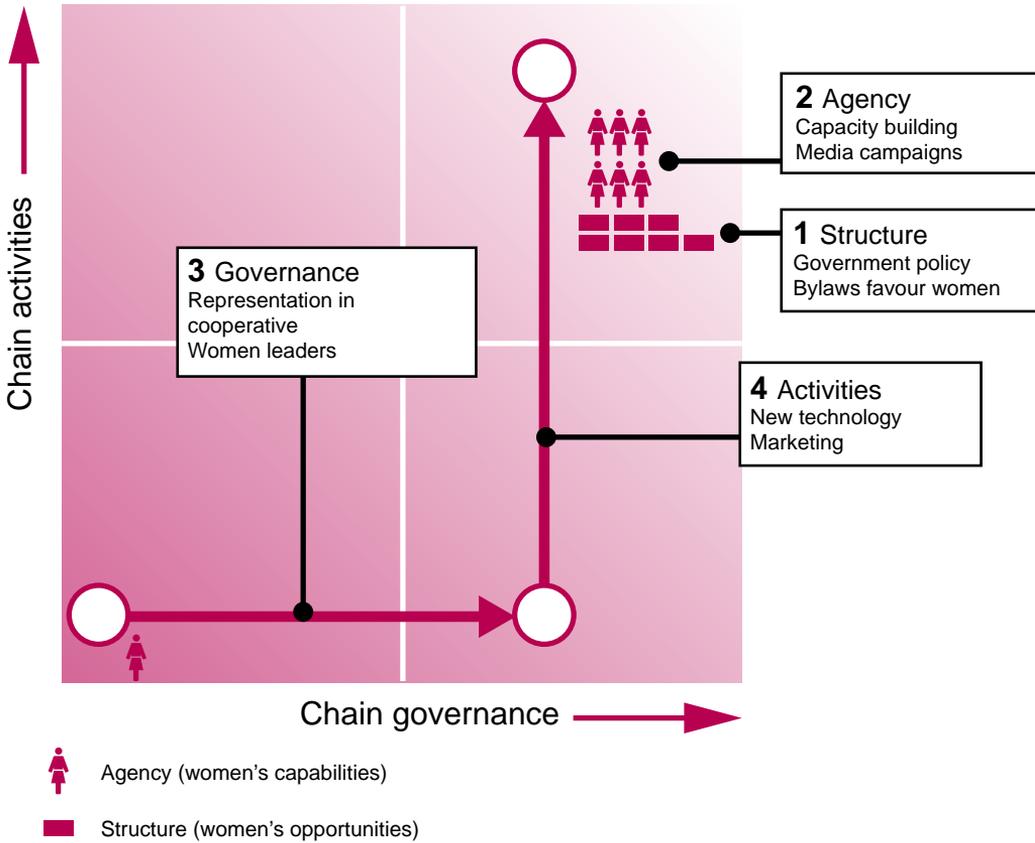


Figure 5.2. Changes in the honey chain in Rwanda

their role in **chain governance** expanded, and some women took on leadership positions. Finally, again, more as a result than a specific intervention, the **activities** that women were involved in changed: where they used to be excluded from beekeeping, they are now leaders in the field. Significant changes across all four dimensions can be seen.

## Case 5.2 “Women don’t climb trees”: Beekeeping in Ethiopia

*Gizachew Sisay*

A single hive hums with an average of 60,000 bees, all industriously gathering nectar, building hexagonal honeycombs, and tending their larvae, and led by a queen. Multiply that by the 10 million colonies in Ethiopia, and that is a lot of bees, and a lot of honey. Ethiopia is the largest honey producer in Africa, and honey is an important product. It is the basic ingredient in *tej*, a traditional honey wine.

Demand for honey and other bee products is rising, both within Ethiopia and internationally. There is great potential for increasing both production and quality: current output is somewhere between 10 and 25% of the potential, and quality is poor. Over 95% of Ethiopia’s beekeepers use traditional techniques. Many hives are made of hollow logs hanging in trees or are kept in a shed, and processing methods are frequently crude.

Women help with honey production, but climbing trees is out. “Not appropriate!” say the men. “Too dangerous!” “Too far away from home!” Plus, women do not normally travel long distances to markets or for training. Many are illiterate and have few business skills. That limits their opportunities as entrepreneurs and leaders. At the start of Oxfam GB’s honey programme, fewer than 1% of honey-cooperative members were women.

But beekeeping holds promise for women, for many of the same reasons as in Rwanda (see Case 5.1): it needs relatively little capital, does not rely on land or expensive inputs, and helps cushion families during emergencies. Four modern hives can earn as much as half a hectare of maize or teff.

### Box 5.2. Amsal Endale: A beekeeper in Ethiopia

After taking a 5-day course on beekeeping, Amsal Endale had learned enough to transfer her bee colonies from traditional log hives to a new type of hive. As she gained experience, she was elected leader of her self-help group of 12 male and female beekeepers in her village in rural Ethiopia. She was an innovator too: she made a low-cost hive from mud, so had to buy only a few wooden components.

Like the other members of her group, she increased her honey output. She has bought a cow with the proceeds. Unusually for Ethiopia, it is she – rather than her husband – who manages the family hives. Her husband has come to appreciate her big contribution to the family income.

*More information: Gizachew Sisay, Oxfam GB, Ethiopia*





Keen to promote the honey industry, the regional government of Amhara, a big state in northern Ethiopia, offers farmers loans through the cooperatives so they can buy the modern hives. But women rarely benefit, as relatively few are members of the cooperatives.

### A forum on honey

Oxfam GB works with Zembaba, an umbrella organization of nine beekeepers' cooperatives, which have over 3,700 members (about one-fifth of whom are now women as a result of Oxfam's intervention). Zembaba is the only beekeepers' union in Amhara. It markets honey under the "AMAR" brand, a registered trademark that is well known in Ethiopia.

Oxfam GB has a strong commitment towards putting women at the heart of development. Its programme is designed to increase women's involvement in beekeeping and honey production. It first identified all the actors: producers, traders, processors, service providers and consumers. It analysed the value chain to see how it might function more efficiently and with more engagement from women. It established and facilitates a stakeholders' forum, composed of the Amhara government authorities, the private sector, the producer cooperatives and the Zembaba union, to discuss problems and find ways to overcome them.



### Multifaceted programme for women beekeepers

The forum agreed on a programme that addresses constraints of involving women at various stages in the value chain. Oxfam guides and supports this programme.

- **Training.** The Zembaba union and two NGOs, SoS Sahel and the Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA), provided training and extension services to women beekeepers, introduced the modern hives, and encouraged the women to join the cooperatives.
- **Training centre.** Oxfam and Ambrosia PLC, the largest honey processor in Ethiopia, established a training and demonstration centre in a village called Rim, a major honey-producing area. Groups of women beekeepers visit the centre to improve their skills.
- **Improved hives.** The cost and availability of the improved hives is a key constraint. Oxfam had supported the Zembaba union to set up an enterprise to produce and sell such hives on credit.
- **Self-help groups.** The Zembaba union helped 440 women beekeepers organize themselves into 22 self-help groups, which enable their members to save small amounts of money regularly and lend it out to each member in turn. Oxfam also started a functional literacy programme to teach the women how to read and write, and to give them the skills they need to manage their organizations and their hives.
- **Collection centres.** To make it easier for the women to deliver their honey, the cooperatives established collection centres in convenient places. Women bring the honeycombs in a bucket or container to the collection centre, where staff (most of whom are local women) check the quality, weigh it, and pay the producer. The staff use a press or extractor to separate the honey from the

wax, and then put it in a plastic barrel ready for sale. Information on prices and quality is posted at collection centres, and the staff keep the producers informed about changes.

- **Contract purchases.** Ambrosia can process up to 3,400 tons of honey a year. It buys raw honey from the cooperatives under contract. It pre-finances them so they can pay producers in cash when they deliver the honey to the collection centres.
- **New bylaws.** The cooperatives and the Zembaba union have amended their bylaws to allow more than one person in a household to join. That means women can be full members along with their husbands.

### A hive of activity

As a result of these interventions, the honey business has expanded and more women now harvest and market honey. Quality improvements have made it possible to shift from the *tej* market to table honey, which fetches 50% more. Productivity has risen from 5–10 kg/hive/year to 20–30 kg. The old, male-dominated traditional chain has been transformed: it is now more organized, is better linked to the market, and involves both men and women. The community perception of women's role in beekeeping has changed. Women now make up 45% of the cooperative members, and some have taken leadership positions.

Oxfam plans to study the impact of the women's activities on the relationships between men and women in the household. It also hopes to push for more participation by women in processing and marketing honey.

### Analysing the change

The women began working in an existing value chain. Technology, cooperation, training and financial schemes all improved to make honey more profitable and accessible for women. The first step was to increase women's **chain activities** and improve their **agency**: before the intervention, they did keep bees at all; now they do, and they are also involved in harvesting, marketing, and semi-processing. This has improved the quality of the honey. New technology was introduced that was appropriate to women; and collection points were chosen with women's mobility in mind. As a result, the quality and production of honey increased. Beekeeping became easier and was professionalized. Agency has increased with the initiative; it is considered the most significant change. Women now make up 45% of the cooperative members, and some have taken leadership positions. Women themselves have become more confident and feel proud to take up carpentry and make traditional hives. Some are also proud as they have taken up leadership positions over clusters of men beekeepers.

Building on this, **chain governance** by women has increased: women are now represented in cooperatives and women groups, and some have become leaders. They have a voice in setting prices at the cooperative level, and have access to market information. They are also able to control the beehives and the related income.

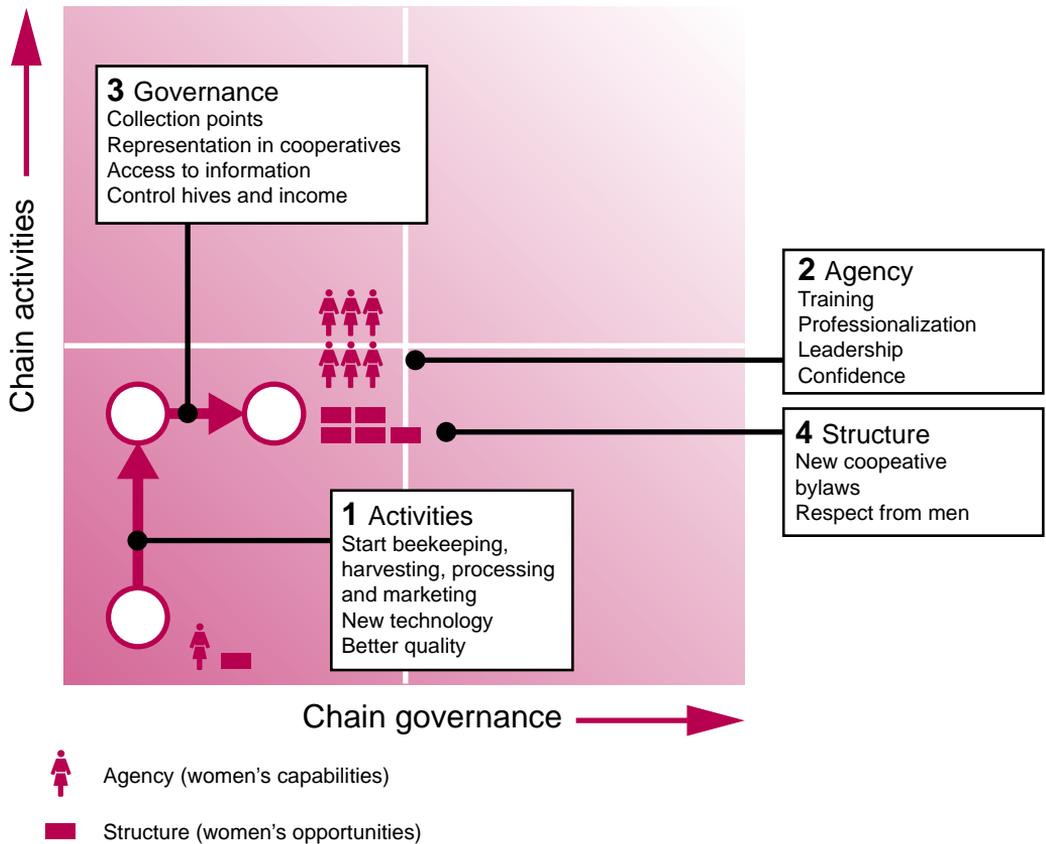


Figure 5.3. Changes in the honey chain in Ethiopia

The final step in the process was a change in societal **structures**. For example, the rules for becoming member of a cooperative have changed through new bylaws, allowing more than one person in a household to join the union. That means women can be full members alongside their husbands. On a household level, women are now respected by the men because they bring in part of the household income.

## Case 5.3 Making women dairy farmers visible in Nicaragua

*Mieke Vanderschaeghe and Patricia Lindo*

The Saturday market at Río Blanco is well known throughout Nicaragua for its cheese.<sup>1</sup> It is at one end of the “Via Lactia”, the “Milky Way” – a hilly area with many small-scale dairy farms. Traders come from as far away as neighbouring El Salvador, eight hours away over a bumpy road, just to buy cheese that they can use to stuff a type of tortilla called *pupusa*.

Some of the cheese in the market comes from scattered farms in the municipality of Siuna, another three hours away over another rutted road. The dairy farmers each keep between 10 and 50 cattle, and produce between 10 and 60 litres of milk a day. They also raise pigs, horses and chickens, and grow maize, beans and rice.

Men are traditionally the owners of the cattle in Nicaragua, and they are seen as the heads of their families. Early every morning, they go out into the farmyard when the cows that are in milk have spent the night. They tie each animal’s legs together, bring its calf to draw down the milk, then push the calf away and start milking the udder. When they have finished, they pour the milk into aluminium churns, then carry it to the local cooperative on horses, or load them onto a van that goes around the farms in the morning when it is still cool. The cows and calves are sent out to the pasture to graze.

That is a busy time for the men. But their wives have busy too. They get up even earlier than the men, make breakfast, wash the cows’ udders with water that they have purified with chlorine – and remind their husbands to wash their hands. They shoo the chickens away, strain the milk through a cloth to remove impurities, and put the lids on the churns. At some time during the day, they have to fetch water from the well or river, and wash the buckets, churns and cloths. And that is not to mention cooking meals, washing, ironing, sweeping the house, and the many other chores that enable the household to function.

Although women make sure that the milk is good quality, they are not seen as milk producers. They are not members of the cooperative, and their husbands get to keep the money from the milk sales.

### Removing the invisibility cloak

There are five farmer-owned cooperatives in the area: they test the milk for fat content, then make blocks of salty, unpasteurized cheese. They send these to the market, as well as supplying small shops and local traders.

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GIZ and Oxfam GB are working as an alliance to promote the dairy value chain in Siuna. They aim to strengthen the cooperatives and improve the processing and marketing of dairy products by linking the cooperatives to service providers and new markets. They realized that the cooperatives were composed almost entirely of men, and saw the need to involve women more.

Two specialists on gender in value chains held a series of one-day meetings with all 25 members of Coomautom (the cooperative in the village of Negrowás) and their wives. There were four meetings in all, spread over a period of 6 months.

In the first meeting, groups of women and men drew the dairy value chain on big pieces of paper. They drew what they produced, who they sold to, and the final market for their products. They then compared and discussed the drawings. That introduced the women to the idea of value chains.

The second meeting focused on milk quality. This is important if the cooperatives are to develop higher-value markets and pay more to the farmers for a better-quality product. Separate groups of men and women explored how each contributed to the quality of the milk, and the benefits each received.

The third meeting looked at the services the men and women receive from the cooperative, and identified additional services they needed – such as credit to buy cows, training in pasture management and help in opening bank accounts.

The final session covered communication skills between husband and wife, promoted joint decision-making, and discussed how the cooperative should deal with the family as a business unit, and not just the men.

### **Only four days...**

These four meetings had surprising results.

The women have come to see themselves as dairy farmers. They went from being invisible to being seen, and seeing themselves, as important actors in upgrading the quality of dairy products. They have gained self-awareness about their contribution to milk quality and the family economy. They now suggest improvements to the farm, and demand a bigger share of the family's income from milk. They can now join the cooperative and use its services. They have asked for technical training, as well as loans to buy cattle, fodder seed and fences.

The men are more inclined to recognize women's contributions to dairy production. They now see things like fetching water and cleaning the pots as work that contributes to the quality of the product. Several couples have started working more together, discussing their plans, and sharing tasks that they used to do alone.

The cooperatives changed their bylaws to make it easier for women to join as full members. For example, they allowed fees to be paid in instalments. In just one year, proportion of Coomautom cooperative members who were women rose from 8% to 43%. The cooperative appointed a woman as its business manager, and she has suggested that the cooperative start producing round cheeses rather than the usual squares. Previously the only women leaders were in social rather

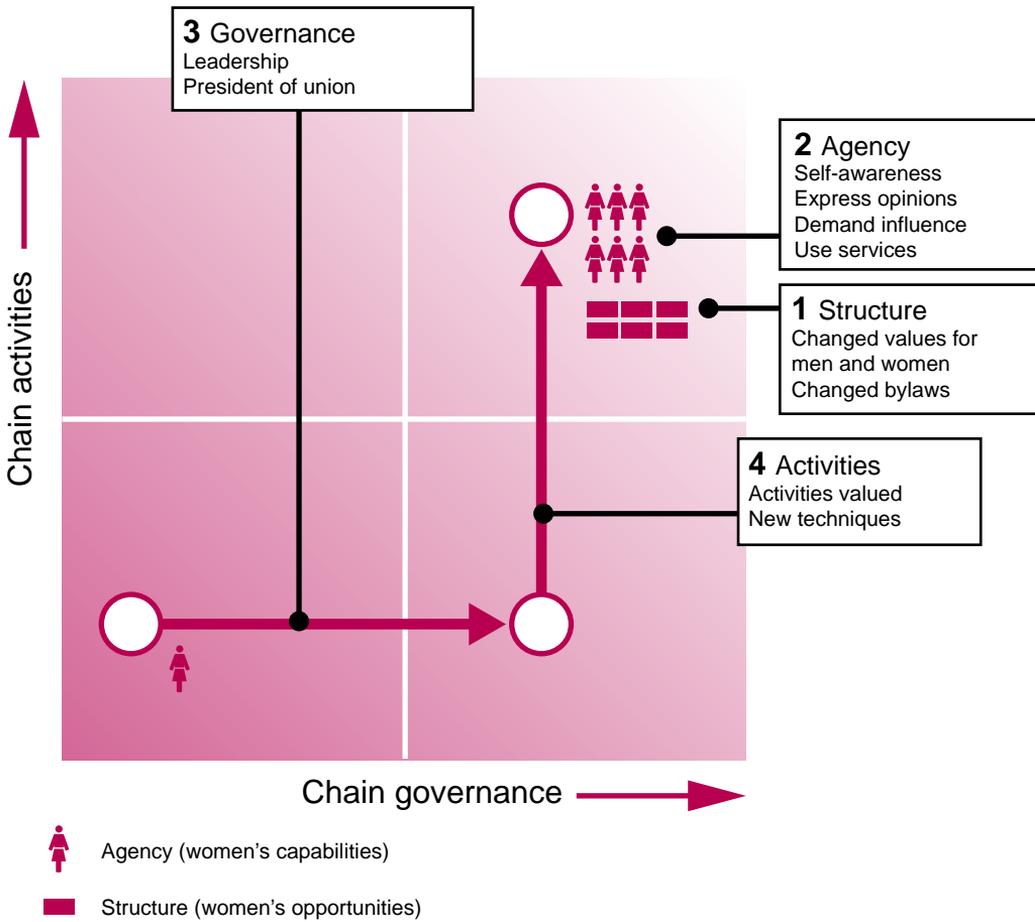


Figure 5.4. Changes in the dairy chain in Nicaragua

than business fields. The cooperatives now see women as having a dynamic and efficient management style, and tend to be better communicators and more organized than men.

The five cooperatives in the Siuna area, which have recently formed a union known as “Cinco Pinos” (“five pines”), have elected a woman as their president.

Oxfam, GIZ and the support services have recognized the key role played by women in dairying. They have assigned more resources for women, and now routinely invite women to attend training on dairying, processing, marketing and business management. The dairy value chain commission of Siuna, promoted by GIZ, is working on a legal service to register land as common ownership of husband and wife.

### Analysing the change

The women were already active in the dairy value chain, but their work was not recognized or considered a real contribution. The first step was to stimulate change in societal **structures** through triggering men and women to reconsider

their values and the value they place on different tasks in the dairy chain. Bylaws within the cooperative were changed to reflect the social shift underway in order to make it easier for women to join.

As women went from being unrecognized contributors to important actors, their **agency** flourished. Women gained self-awareness as to their contribution to milk quality and the family economy, which was a springboard for more active contributions. They now make suggestions for improvements to the farm, and demand a bigger share of the family's income from milk. They can now join the cooperative and use its services. They have asked for technical training, and loans to buy cattle, fodder seed and fences.

The most significant changes are in terms of chain governance. We now see women taking up leadership positions and that a woman has been elected as the president of the union for the region. The final change, and in fact the least significant, was in terms of women's participation in chain activities. Women had already been doing most activities in the dairy chain, which they still continue to do post-intervention. What has changed is the value given to these activities. Some women take up new roles and are elected in leadership positions. They now hold positions in the cooperative, which has improved innovation, management and processing.

## Women in a man's world

We can draw a number of lessons on how to make women visible in male-dominated chains:

- In many situations, women already do part of the work (as in the dairy case in Nicaragua) but are not recognized for it. Their role becomes visible only through deliberate investigation, such as looking at the roles of men and women at each stage in the value chain.
- Promoting gender in these value chains is not only a case of rights, but also clearly a matter of boosting business performance. Women can help improve quality and business performance (efficiency and effectiveness) because of their frequent roles in resource management and quality upgrading. Dealing with economic issues first reduces confrontations from male-dominated farmers' organizations, the private sector and government organizations.
- New technology and production techniques can open up opportunities for women to participate and increase value in the chain.

It is just plain smart to involve women: they perform well in leadership positions and improve management; they can develop better practices and higher quality when valued for their contributions. Empowerment and income give them independence and the motivation to improve their work and produce more.

We can distinguish five types of interventions in this subchapter:

- Making women's contributions visible
- Upgrading women's roles
- Rewarding women for the work that they do
- Sensitizing men and the community to changing gender dynamics
- Involving women in organizations
- Introducing new services and technology.

### **Making women's contributions visible**

In many cases, women already do a lot of the work within a value chain, but they are not acknowledged for it. Gender mapping (see Chapter 10.3) can be used to identify value chains with high market potential and limited entry barriers for women: for example, those that do not require big investments or land, and that are socially acceptable. This analysis is helpful when looking for ways to include women in new value chains.

When designing interventions, it is useful to analyse the constraints and opportunities in engaging women at various stages in male-dominated value chains. Such an analysis led Oxfam to design an adult literacy programme to help Ethiopian women beekeepers take on leadership positions. It worked with a partner specialized in literacy and numeracy, and offered courses adapted to the subject area and at convenient times and places for the women.

## Upgrading women's roles

This can be done by enabling women to take on new functions within an existing chain, such as processing, packaging and value addition. Women can also work outside the chain as service providers, for example in input supplies, product distribution and management. In Ethiopia, for example, women started to make items such as hives, beekeeping gloves and protective veils. As women beekeepers gained skills and experience, they started to take on leadership positions, where they could build on their qualities and potential in innovativeness, concern for quality, reliability, communication and management. In the Rwanda case, these qualities have made women better qualified than men in certain positions.

Investing in women's ownership of land, productive resources and assets can improve their negotiating position within the family and in the value chain. When they get more responsibility for what they do, they are stimulated to improve their practices, and they become less dependent on men. Policy changes may be required to stimulate such changes.

## Rewarding women for the work that they do

Certifying products as made by women makes it possible to serve niche markets. This strategy gives the women recognition for their contribution to production. It also gives women control over their income. This is the approach pursued by *Café Femenino* and *Con Manos de Mujer* (Box 5.3) in coffee.

### Box 5.3. Gender-sensitive payment systems

#### *Café Femenino*

*Café Femenino* coffees (Case 7.1) generate a small premium for the women who produce it. This premium is paid to each woman directly so she can control some of her earnings. That helps to change how her contribution is valued, while leaving to the cooperative the option of handling the rest of the payment for the coffee through the system already in place, *de facto*, via the men. This flexible set-up helps get the cooperative on board in terms of handling and engaging in the *Café Femenino* programme.

Cooperatives have different ways of paying their producers: the payment may not be paid at one time, but a partial payment at the time of sale and part at the end of the year. As time progresses men in the *Café Femenino* programme are becoming more willing to make the payments for the women's coffee directly to the women, in the same way it is paid to the men. But it is easier to begin in a less threatening manner and work towards gaining their total support.

#### *Con Manos de Mujer*

*Con Manos de Mujer* ("with women's hands", Case 7.2) is a standard directed towards women who produce agricultural products, textiles, handicrafts and other items. The standard applies to products produced by women; it covers small-, medium-, and larger-scale producers. The standard ensures that payment and the distribution of profit are fair. The *Con Manos de Mujer* label aims for women to decide what to do with the money they earn. For this reason, the women are paid directly for their produce.

*More information: Gay Smith (Café Femenino) and Loren Estevez (Con Manos de Mujer)*

### Box 5.4. Men's coffee, women's bananas and vanilla

The Export Promotion of Organic Products from Africa (EPOPA) programme (Case 7.3) was a Swedish-funded programme to promote exports of organic products from Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia. It ran from 1997 to 2008 and involved many organic projects. Its impact on gender equality varied: it depended to a large extent on the local context and on commodity characteristics, including whether the crop was traditionally dominated by men.

One organic coffee project in Tanzania, KNCU, illustrates why it is essential to create space for women in a male-dominated crop. Women were not motivated to get involved in coffee, which had always been a men's crop. They were more interested in intercropping bananas between the coffee plants: that was where they earned their money. They put compost around the banana rather than the coffee trees. Not knowing about this gender dynamic reduced the coffee output.

A similar thing happened in the Bukonzo coffee cooperative in Uganda (Case 6.2 and Box 6.10). Here, the men worked in town, so the women took care of the coffee. But the men still thought of themselves as the coffee owners: they came home just in time for the harvest so that they could sell and get paid for it. In an effort to earn something for their work, the women would pick unripe beans to sell to traders before their husbands came home. That meant lower product quality.

Female farmers were much more motivated to be part of an organic vanilla project in Uganda. Vanilla was a fairly new crop. Because women were doing most of the work, they also wanted to benefit. There was no history of male domination in vanilla in the region, so women were able to control the income they earned. Both motivation and quality were high.

*More information: Inge Vos (AgroEco Consultancy) and Paineto Baluku (Bukonzo Joint Cooperative Microfinance Society)*

### Sensitizing men and the community to changing gender dynamics

Sensitizing people can be a useful way of raising the visibility of women. Men are often not aware of the important role that women play in various aspects of the value chain. Sensitization can raise awareness and appreciation of women's work.

But it is not just men who are the targets for such sensitization. Women themselves may not realize how much they contribute to their own marginalization. And the community as a whole, other actors in the value chain, and government agencies, may also see a product as being the result of men's work – and so belonging to the men.

Changing this may be quite simple, as in the Nicaragua case, where a series of meetings (coupled with skilful facilitation!) was enough to change the male-dominated dairy value chain. Discussions drew attention to women's contributions, challenged the inequality in control over income and enjoyment of benefits, and linked gender equality to product quality and competitiveness. A better understanding of the roles of men and women improved communication and joint decision-making within the family.

But it may also require other changes, as in the Ethiopia and Rwanda honey cases, where women took on new activities and only gradually became recognized and

accepted as beekeepers. To make hives they took up carpentry, not a traditional women's activity. That led to changes in the division of labour and decision-making within each household.

Sensitizing the community as to changing gender dynamics may also lead to institutional changes that open the way for an increased role for women. In Rwanda, we can see that women are now accepted as cooperative members, and they have started moving into management positions. Changes in policy and legislation may be required, for example to allow women to own land or a business. Changing institutions, policies and laws can be hard, but is important for structural and sustainable change.

### **Involving women in organizations**

Apparently petty rules may make it hard for women to take become members of producer organizations and cooperatives. If only one person per household can be a member, that person is almost always the man. Charging registration fees or requiring members to buy shares may prevent women who have no cash from joining. Raising awareness of the organization's management and existing members can persuade them to change such rules and open up membership to more women.

#### **Box 5.5. Developing the cashew value chain in Benin**

The cashew value chain in central Benin is traditionally dominated by men. Although women do a lot of work, it is their husbands to get the income. The only way for women to earn a living from cashew is to become traders, walking miles from village to village to collect cashew nuts for wholesalers, who pay them \$10 per ton.

With the help of SNV, CRADIB (a local NGO: the Centre de Recherches et d'Actions pour le Développement des Initiatives à la Base) and other partners, Beninois women have organized themselves into cooperatives and are investing in producing cashew, processing cashew apples, and selling nuts to a processor and to exporters. SNV helped the women groups form the cooperatives, connected them to markets, and supported them in negotiating with buyers. It also assisted them with the equipment so they could make cashew-apple juice.

After four years, 400 women owned plantations covering 400 hectares. When they saw the benefits of the cashew business, the women became interested in the technical training: if they see a market opportunity, the women's latent entrepreneurship skills resurface.

The success has led local authorities to recognize that cashew can be a woman's business too. They supported a national certification process and labelling, and provided the authorizations needed to serve the national market. As their products become more popular, the women's work in the cashew value chain is being increasingly recognized. That opens doors to new markets and higher incomes.

CRADIB, the NGO providing business development support, has gradually been transformed into an enterprise to provide services. This mutation is vital to ensure the women's financial independence.

*More information: Antoine Hounbedji, ahounbedji @snvworld.org*

An alternative is to promote collective action by women – for example, by helping them organize their own cooperative or self-help group. This was done in the Ethiopia honey case. Box 5.5 gives another example, from Benin. Here, organizing women producers both enabled them enter the male-dominated cashew chain and to get services such as finance and inputs. Collective action was a stepping stone to other improvements. Such organizations also make it easier for women to talk and learn about other issues they face, such as HIV/AIDS. By working together, women can reap the benefits of collective action and assume new roles beyond mere production.

### **Introducing new services and technology**

Women may need different types of services from men, and it may be necessary to tailor services specifically for women. Training is an obvious example. Women often cannot travel far from home to attend training: because of social restrictions, a lack of money, fears for personal safety, household duties, pregnancy and breastfeeding. So training has to be done closer to home, and at times that women find convenient.

Access to financial services can be a challenge for women. They may lack information; they may not have the financial skills and the ability to identify the right business; they may not have the collateral for a loan. To overcome such problems, Oxfam in Ethiopia provides loan guarantees for small businesses run by men and women.

To reach women, a value chain that has market potential and technology that works for women must be chosen. New technologies can open up possibilities for women. In the Ethiopia and Rwanda cases, the new hives have made it possible for women to start keeping bees and producing honey.

### **Conclusions**

When looking for ways to position women in male-dominated or new value chains, it is important to understand women's and men's roles in the chain. What do women and men do? How is their work valued? What are women allowed to do culturally and legally? How do cultural norms and community perceptions affect gender relations? Gender mapping is a tool to start exploring these questions (Chapter 10.2).

Such an understanding makes it possible to design suitable interventions. In the Rwanda honey chain, these included a gender-sensitization campaign, introducing new technology, and changing the law. In Ethiopia, it meant changing cooperative rules to allow more than one person in a household to join. In the dairy chain in Nicaragua, it meant making women's contribution to product quality visible, so changing men's perceptions of women's work.

Interventions to support women in male-dominated chains are easiest where land ownership is not a prerequisite, and where expensive inputs are not needed, and where no major barriers constrain women's participation. The Rwandan

and Ethiopian beekeeping cases are examples of this. Women could engage as independent actors, giving them control over the assets needed to be owners of the product. All the cases presented in this chapter illustrate male-dominated chains where there are few barriers to entry for women. Women did not have to own land or buy expensive inputs. They could do the activities easily, and their work burden did not get much heavier.

But in all the cases, it was necessary to change rules (the “structures” constraining participation) before women could step into new activities. One example of a structural change is a new law or regulations, like allowing women to join cooperatives. In many cases legal structures need to be amended to remove barriers for women. Another example of a structural change related to culture, where values and norms shift to accommodate women’s participation. Men need to be sensitized so women can take up activities within the chain.

It takes time and effort to change attitudes towards women’s roles. But when people realize that “women can do it”, new possibilities for women can open up quite quickly. Institutional (or structural) changes can open up valued positions within a value chain to women. They can foster women’s capabilities (“agency”) and can expand their activities within the chain and beyond it.

The interventions discussed in this subchapter are gender specific – women are targeted for support in participating in male-dominated chains, with an aim to redistribute the benefits of participation in chain activities so that they can reap the rewards of their labour. In this sense, the interventions can also be considered gender redistributive and targeting women’s strategic needs – to be equal, respected, visible actors in the chain.

### Situating the arguments

Supporting women in male-dominated chains recognizes the right that women have to participate in value chain activities. It links nicely to the **social justice** argument – that women have the right to participate.



Further, for development organizations, choosing to support women in male-dominated chains is a means to better **fight poverty** by fully engaging all actors involved and by improving the income of women who work in the rural sector.



And finally, as women become more active in male-dominated chains, they present a business opportunity – they are acting as **new suppliers** in the chain.



## 5.2 Female entrepreneurship

An entrepreneur is “someone who exercises initiative by organizing a venture to take benefit of an opportunity and, as the decision maker, decides what, how, and how much of a good or service will be produced”.<sup>1</sup> When we talk about rural entrepreneurs we tend to think of men: rural businessmen, tradesmen or middlemen. If women are involved in a business it is often considered a side activity – to make a bit of extra money alongside the main income of the husband, rather than a serious business in itself. Businesses owned and run by women are often in processing such as food and small-scale retailing, and add little value. Women are concentrated in labour-intensive, low-tech types of production that require little capital and make little profit.

Nevertheless, women entrepreneurs are important economic actors who deserve support. Their businesses have positive spin-offs for economic development (see also Chapter 2) and cut poverty, as women tend to use their income for their families’ welfare – and of the children in particular.

Investing in women and increasing the income they control is a very effective way to fight poverty. Some women-owned businesses (for example, in food processing, restaurants and arts-and-crafts) maintain a region’s cultural identity and can be crucial for (eco)tourism. Successful businesses also empower women. For these reasons supporting women to expand their businesses is more than justified. But attention needs to be paid to the specific constraints that women face in establishing a business.

A study by Fafchamps and Minten (2001) in Madagascar, Malawi and Benin showed that female entrepreneurs are systematically disadvantaged although they form the majority of agricultural labourers and traders. They have lower productivity, accumulate productive assets more slowly, and start their trading business with less social and working capital. Some of the challenges facing women’s businesses are common to all small and mid-sized enterprises, whether run by women or men: financing, globalization of social and economic environments, marketing, and management.

But women face extra barriers. Many occupations are sexually stereotyped, and this is often sustained by government policies and societal attitudes. Women’s choices of occupations are influenced by men’s authority, and women who pursue demanding careers can encounter societal prejudices. Women are expected to maintain the household, so have to work a double shift: at work and at home (see Box 1.2 for more on the triple roles of women). Other impediments to women’s economic positions are deeply entrenched societal, cultural, and religious attitudes (Lapidus, cited in Jalbert 1999).

Despite these impediments, Jalbert (1999) demonstrates that when it comes to creating a business, women are just as achievement-oriented, aggressive, in-

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1 From the business dictionary, [www.businessdictionary.com/definition/entrepreneur.html#ix-zz1k16cJYoj](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/entrepreneur.html#ix-zz1k16cJYoj)

dependent, risk-taking, self-confident, hard-working (and so on) as men. The number of women-owned business is on the rise in many regions in the world. It is often women who improve product quality and add value to products. Involving women improves management in the family, on the farm and in producer organizations.

### **Some differences between businessmen and -women**

Their traditional and cultural responsibilities force women to combine business activities with care of the household and children. They have limited time left for their businesses. These duties also limit the geographical area where they can work, as they may have to stay close to home. Women may have less access to public areas (such as bars and cafés) where information is exchanged, and find it hard to travel to distant markets to establish business relations. This limited radius means they have less access to market information, business advice and bank loans.

In general, women-run businesses are smaller-scale than those run by men because of a lack of money to invest and collateral for loans. Women's businesses often do not expand as rapidly as those run by men, as women tend to invest more in family needs such as schooling, food and housing. Their feelings of responsibility make women reluctant to put all their money in a single business. To reduce their risks, they may prefer to invest in a variety of small business instead of just one.

This section discusses a strategy to support women to expand their business, start new businesses, innovate, establish business partnerships and grasp new markets. By doing so, women not only increase their profits but also become recognized and are taken seriously as economic actors.

We consider two types of entrepreneurs: individual businesswomen, and associations. In both cases the woman is the owner of her business. But in the latter, an association or producer organization (which may include both men and women) supports the individual women.

This section presents two initiatives to support women entrepreneurs. These initiatives are not concerned with male-dominated or traditional chains, but help develop businesses owned by women in new or existing chains.

- **Case 5.4, Women-run restaurants in Bolivia**, illustrates how individual women can be encouraged to take up a business that is close to home and allows them to make a profit while providing their customers and families with nutritious food.
- **Case 5.5, Hedge funds: Jatropha in Tanzania** shows how women's groups can develop a business in a new value chain. It also shows that when businesses are profitable, men can also get interested: in this example men and women are starting to working together and complement each other's roles.

Four boxes describe women who have become more visible as entrepreneurs:

## Box 5.6. Promoting female entrepreneurs

**Entry point.** Positioning women (and women's groups) as rural entrepreneurs to start new businesses, or helping women to expand and strengthen their business by providing the right services and training.

**Why do it?** Rural women entrepreneurs are under-acknowledged, although their numbers are growing. Compared to men, women tend to face extra challenges in up-scaling or upgrading their businesses. Interventions to support female entrepreneurs bring economic prosperity, reduce poverty and improve the economic and social position of women and their activities in the chain.

**How to do it?** In some cases women already have businesses and creative, innovative ideas for adding value to products. They need assistance to make their businesses stronger and to transform creative and innovative ideas into profits.

A second part of the strategy is to offer women (or women's groups) ideas and services to start new businesses. This requires:

- Strengthening forms of association and encouraging women to participate in cooperatives or other (women) groups.
- Encouraging businesses in new or existing chains and identifying markets and formulating profitable business ideas.
- Ensuring women have access to business development services (like credit, information and ability to buy land) as well as technical support (business skills, literacy, technology, leadership skills, financial skills, etc.).
- Taking decision-making together.

**When is it a good strategy?** The strategy is particularly suitable:

- When women already take up business initiatives, but could improve them or scale them up.
- When there is a clear market opportunity that women can exploit.
- When business opportunities fit the other demands on women's time and situation. This might mean that they do not require many assets or own land, that the business be close to home, and so on.
- When there is not too much resistance from men and from the rest of the community.

**Conditions for success.**

- Women have access to credit, other services and assets needed for their business.
- Women are the owners of the enterprise.
- It is possible to prevent men from taking over chain activities if the initiative is successful.

- **Box 5.7: Marina: A Ricomida restaurant entrepreneur in Bolivia**, shows how one woman became a profit-making entrepreneur and achieved economic independence.
- **Box 5.8: Jilo Gayo Tache: Making aloe vera soap in Ethiopia**, profiles a member of a women-led soap-making cooperative.

- **Box 5.9: Rahel Tamrat: From adviser to honey entrepreneur in Ethiopia**, describes an entrepreneur who expanded her honey advisory service into a processing and exporting business.
- **Box 5.10: Lacteos Doña Esmilda: From small trader to dairy entrepreneur in Nicaragua** tells how a small-scale trader built up her dairy business after getting training and equipment from an NGO. She is now economically independent and has hired four staff.

## Case 5.4 Women-run restaurants in Bolivia

*Emma Saavedra*

The city of Cochabamba, in a broad valley in the Bolivian Andes, is famous for two things. One is the Cristo de la Concordia – a gigantic statue of Christ, taller than the one in Rio de Janeiro. The other is its food, and the many excellent restaurants in the city centre.

On the poorer outskirts of the city, though, good, cheap restaurants used to be few and far between. That was a problem for people living and working in these areas. But it was also an opportunity for new female entrepreneurs, who have developed a chain of 38 restaurants known as “Ricomida” (from the “Rica comida”, Spanish for “nice food”).

All the Ricomida restaurants are owned and managed by individual women. They have a common branding: a green decor, the same posters and pictures, and the same staff uniforms. They serve cheap, nutritious food, prepared and served hygienically. The menu varies from day to day and from week to week, ensuring a varied and interesting diet for regular customers.

### Starting a restaurant chain

The idea for the Ricomida restaurants came from IFFI, a Bolivian NGO supported by ICCO that has promoted the empowerment of Cochabamba women since 1981. The restaurants aim to solve several problems at once: to enable women to earn money while working at home, to help them improve their family’s nutrition, and to empower them in making decisions. By working in groups, they could negotiate to buy supplies at low prices and could learn and share experiences with others.

The restaurants are small: they can serve perhaps 15 or 20 customers at a time. Starting such a business does not need a lot of capital, but it is hard work. It means getting up early in the morning to buy fresh ingredients, preparing dishes for different meals, and serving and clearing up until late at night. The work is mostly done by women, perhaps with help from their children. Few men are involved.

IFFI trained the women how to manage a business, keep accounts and calculate costs and income. That let them work out how much food they should produce to make a profit. They also learned how to prepare different dishes, plan menus, and conform to the green Ricomida brand image. At the monthly general meetings, the women exchange new recipes – some of which they have developed themselves.

IFFI offers the women an initial credit as seed capital to start their business. To qualify, the women must have a room where they can serve customers, and a kitchen with cooking facilities and a refrigerator. Most borrowers use the money to buy additional equipment, tables, plates and cups, knives and forks, and serving

### Box 5.7. Marina: A Ricomida restaurant entrepreneur in Bolivia



“My name is Marina. I live in Cochabamba and I have three children. I used to sell toilet paper in the La Cancha market. I had to get up early, get the children off to school, then walk around the market with my one-year-old son, trying to find customers. We were both exhausted by the end of the day. Sometimes I earned enough, and sometimes not very much.

“Ricomida has changed my life. I started in 2006. First I got training on how to run my own restaurant. I never thought I would have my own business, but now I have it, it is mine! My children help peel and dice the vegetables when they have finished their homework. They also help serve customers.

“Every month I go to a Ricomida association meeting. We exchange recipes; we discuss relations with our suppliers and common problems. I am happy because my children get to eat nice food, and I can follow their education. I serve about 20 clients a day, and I know what my profits are because I register them. Sometimes my profits amount to 50% of my sales.

“I am really happy with my business. I would like to get more training, and I want to save money to buy more things I need to cater for special events like parties and weddings.”

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utensils. The media were invited to the Ricomida restaurant launch ceremony in August 2006.

### Tasty profits

The restaurants have proven popular and profitable. At lunchtime, hungry customers finish the food within two hours. Many of the owners say that 50% of their sales are profit – though they do not count the cost of their own labour. Some owners have diversified their menus, serving different dishes at different times of the day. Others are re-investing their profits to expand their businesses and serve more customers. There is potential to expand into vegetarian food, diets for diabetics, and preparing food for special events. Loan repayment rates have been very high, and IFFI is considering introducing the women to formal microfinance institutions.

An IFFI technician monitors the restaurants to make sure that they are complying with the Ricomida guidelines. This technician also advises the owners how to improve the quality of the food they serve. IFFI has tried to link farm products with Ricomida. The idea is to buy the products at fair prices. But this initiative is struggling because of the high cost of transport and the low quality of the products. Nevertheless, IFFI continues to explore this possibility.

IFFI has begun collecting information on the women’s economic situation and nutrition levels in their homes. This information will help IFFI and other NGOs working on food security to design better programmes.

The Ricomida initiative has increased the women’s economic situation and their self-esteem. But it is also influencing the men. There are many examples of men serving customers and helping the women decide how to invest their money.

### Analysing the change

The first step was when **women** started taking up new **chain activities**. Before the intervention, the women worked in low-wage jobs as retailers. Now they own their own businesses, and are able to expand their activities in that chain. **Chain governance** was the next step: the women started an association that meets once a month. Through this association, the women lobby the city council and other authorities. Their **agency** increased as their economic situation and self-esteem improved. Before, the women depended on income earned by men. Now they bring in their own money and have economic decision-making power. The final change was in terms of societal **structures**. Some men now help the women with their businesses. The societal attitude towards these women has changed. Through their network, the Ricomida women also try to educate people on women’s rights.

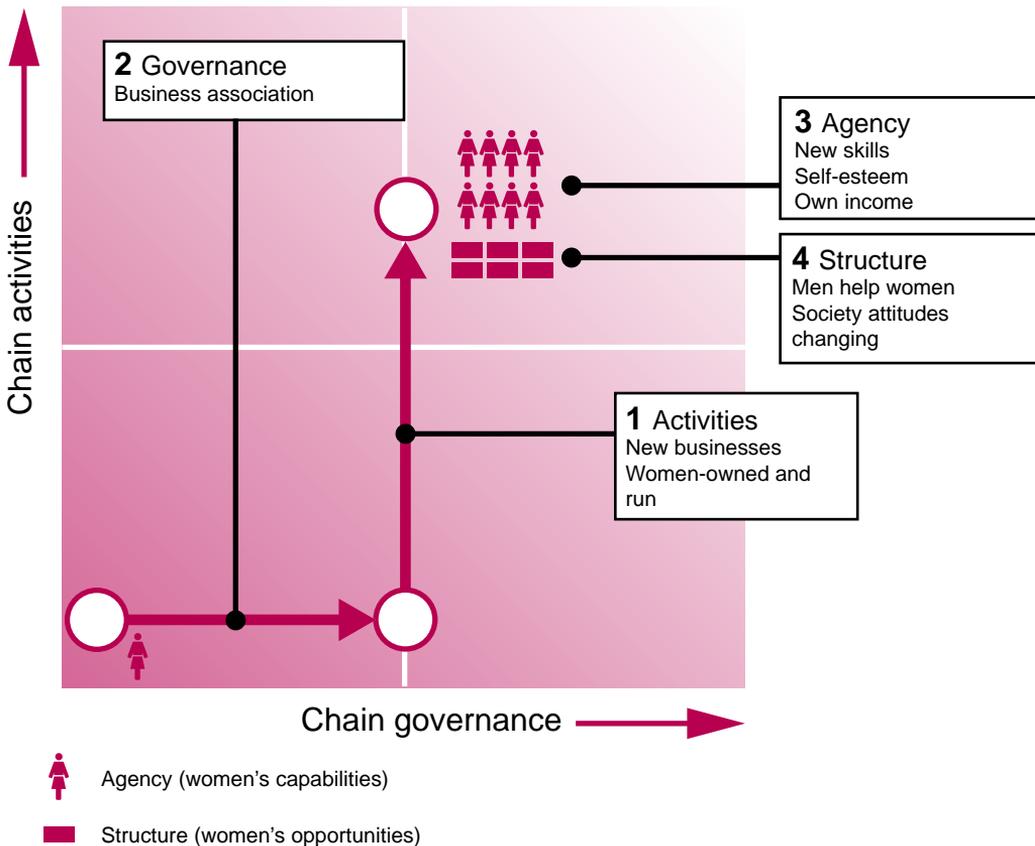


Figure 5.5. Changes in the restaurant chain in Bolivia

## Case 5.5 Hedge funds: *Jatropha* in Tanzania

*Lillian M. Mkony, Jatropha Products Tanzania Limited, jptl@habari.co.tz*

It used to be just a hedge around gardens, fields and graveyards. Now it's a valuable source of soap, lighting oil and income for people across Africa. This multipurpose plant is *Jatropha curcas*, a fast-growing plant that has become synonymous with green energy and biofuel. Within 2 years of planting, *jatropha* starts to produce the oil-bearing seeds; and it keeps on producing for 50 years.

When *Jatropha Products Tanzania Ltd (JPTL)*, a local NGO, suggested to people in Ngamu, a village in Singida region in central Tanzania, that they start growing the crop, the village leaders declined. They were familiar with the plant, which grows wild locally. But they regarded it as a strange plant: good in hedges to keep animals and evil spirits out of farms and graveyards, but not as a crop.

The NGO did not give up. Most of the village leaders were men. Perhaps women would be more interested? It approached women who prepare meals brew beer for funerals and other ceremonies. The women were interested, so JPTL organized them into groups and trained them how to plant *jatropha*, take care of it and harvest the seeds, how to crush the seed to extract the oil and turn it into soap, and how to use the residue as compost. It also supplied equipment for pressing and soap-making, and established collection centres to ease gathering and sale. It bought seeds from existing groups of *jatropha* growers to distribute to new groups and to use in training.

To avoid the risk of people planting *jatropha* instead of food crops, JPTL tells farmers to plant it on boundaries and other patches of unused land.

As *jatropha* and its products have become more visible and have started earning money, men in Ngamu and other villages have got interested. They own the land, so want to have a say in how it is used. JPTL has encouraged them to join the *jatropha*-growing groups and share the work, even though it is unusual for men to join women's groups. As a result, both men and women now cultivate the crop and take part in village meetings. This approach also gives the village leaders the opportunity to start *jatropha* initiatives in their own communities.

Where cash crops used to be thought of as a man's domain, women now play part in all the stages of *jatropha* production, marketing and sale. They bring the seeds to the collection centres, where buyers include both individuals and companies that buy in bulk. One such company is Diligent Tanzania, which processes the seeds and exports oil to the Netherlands. JPTL is negotiating with two other companies that turn the seeds into fuel. Women also sell *jatropha* soap and seedlings in the local market. They use the seedcake, left over after pressing out the oil, as manure.

JPTL has used this approach of involving men and women to reach about 12,000 farmers in six districts in northern and central Tanzania. Strong, mixed groups

of men and women have emerged. Although men have taken leadership, it is agreed that women occupy the positions of treasurer and secretary. By working together, the men have realized that women can also lead. Although the women have learned skills in producing, processing and selling jatropaha, they are still expected to look after their families. That prevents them from travelling around, so they have not been able to become community resource persons or field officers. Such jobs are still dominated by men.

Jatropaha is recognized as both a domestic and an industrial income earner. In either, the role of women is important. In a unique way, it has changed perception of the community, created alternative livelihood and increased mutual respect among men and women in Ngamu. From it, women have gained confidence and realized their potentials as leaders.

### Analysing the change

The first tangible change was that women in the community took up new roles, and were recognized for being able to manage income generating activities. Their place in society has been altered: a **structural** change.

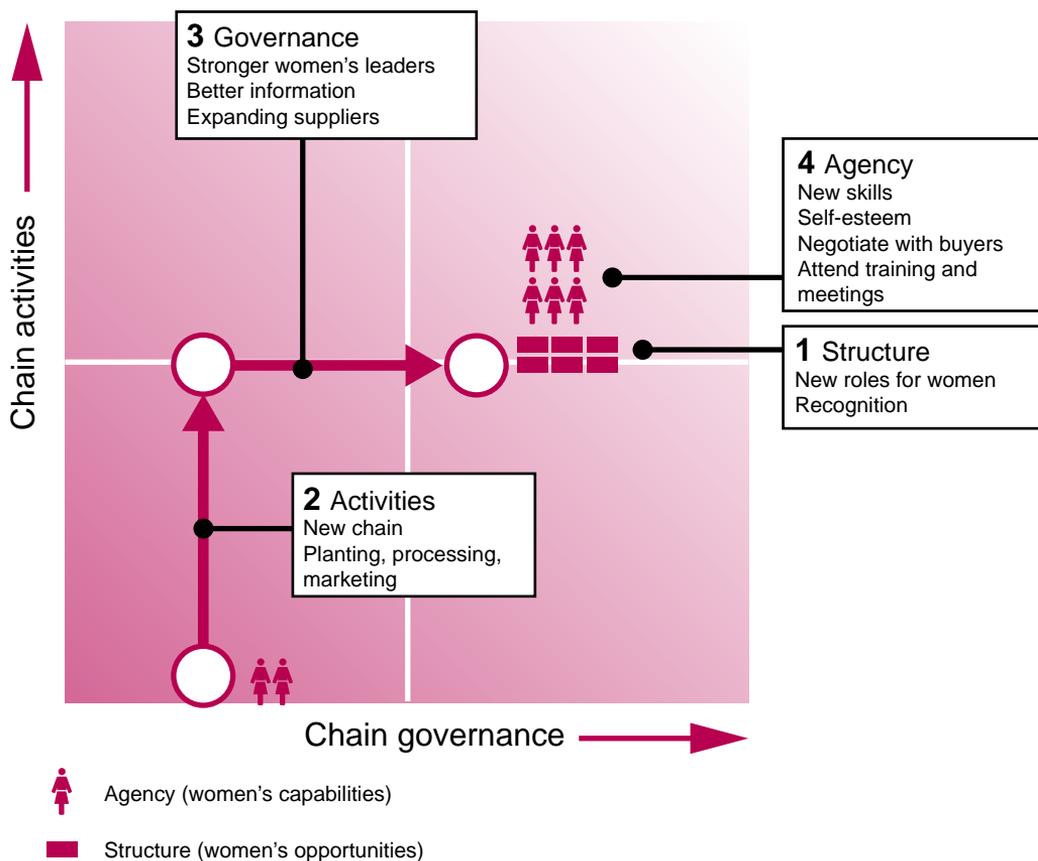


Figure 5.6. Changes in the jatropaha chain in Tanzania

In terms of **chain activities**, everything is new because jatropha was not commoditized prior to the intervention. Now, both women and men plant jatropha, process it into oil and soap or bring it to collection centres that have been established.

**Chain governance** was seen to shift as the leaders of women's groups became stronger and more influential after training. They now keep up-to-date with information on activities and gained revenues, which gives them a better overview of the chain. JPTL is actively looking for more clients.

Finally, **agency**: women have gained more skills and self-esteem. They consider themselves as full chain actors. They negotiate with buyers, they go out and trade Jatropha oil to other villages etc. They are now allowed to attend meetings and trainings.

## Women building businesses

The two cases from Bolivia and Tanzania illustrate a number of lessons for female entrepreneurship. From these we can distil some key approaches for empowering women to become successful entrepreneurs:

- **Encourage businesses in new or existing chains.** New chains offer opportunities for women to take up entrepreneurial roles and adding new activities to the local economy.
- **Strengthen forms of association.**
- **Ensure access to business development services and technical support.** With training and support, women can become entrepreneurs and add value to the chain through creative ideas. In the process, their self-esteem and economic decision-making power increase. Training in production and business development can strengthen women's capacities to the point where they can take up leadership positions. When women have access to services and information, they can expand and improve their businesses.
- **Support women and men making decisions together.** When men see that women are contributing economically, they may decide to work together with them, respecting them as equal partners.

We will look at each of these in turn.

### Encouraging businesses in new or existing value chains

Both the Bolivia and Tanzania cases relate how women established entrepreneurial positions in new value chains which are not per-se dominated by men or women, but which lack high barriers to women's entry. It is important to make sure that entrepreneurial activities do not overburden women, but fit in with their other tasks. This means that location, for example, is important, along with the ability to combine business with household tasks.

In the Ricomida case in Bolivia, the NGO IFFI helped women to start family restaurants – a market segment that did not yet exist. That created new positions for entrepreneurs. Women can take on this work easily because the restaurants are in or close to their homes, so they do not have to travel to work. Plus, a home-based restaurant business enables women to feed their families while cooking for their customers.

In Tanzania, jatropha was not yet thought of as having economic potential. Women's groups picked up on the idea introduced by JP TL. Women do not have to own land to produce the jatropha, and can turn the seeds into soap and oil. JP TL provided women with the equipment they needed.

Box 5.8 tells a similar story from Ethiopia, where both women and men make aloe vera soap. This gives them an extra source of income in addition to the traditional pastoralism.

A value chain approach can be very helpful for expanding existing businesses. The jatropha case in Tanzania illustrates this. Although this started as a new busi-

ness, gradually the perspective was widened to the bigger jatrophha value chain, which opened the perspective to business partnerships with different types of enterprises. The boxes in this section also show that analysing opportunities in the value chain helps women find new roles as entrepreneurs or to expand their businesses in the chain.

### **Strengthening forms of association**

Helping women get organized or exchange information can support their businesses. In the Bolivia case, the women are individual entrepreneurs who exchange information. They have established the Ricomida association to buy ingredients jointly, and so that they can together lobby for regulations that are friendlier to small restaurants.

In the jatrophha case in Tanzania, the women work together, share equipment and set up common collection points. Men joined in when they saw the business

#### **Box 5.8. Jilo Gayo Tache: Making aloe vera soap in Ethiopia**



“My name is Jilo Gayo Tache. I am a member of the aloe soap cooperative. I go there to make soap each Saturday and I attend meetings every other Thursday. Soap-making is unique in the area and I feel very proud to have developed the skills to make it.”

Jilo is a member of the Borana tribe, a group of pastoralists who herd their livestock in southern Ethiopia. For the Borana, it is getting harder and harder to survive by herding livestock. Grazing land, trees and water are getting scarce because of drought and the rising human population.

The aloe soap cooperative is supported by a partnership between SOS Sahel and three cooperatives that aims to advance the position of women. Launched in 2008, this initiative, “Value Chain Empowerment through Women-led Initiatives in Pastoral Communities of Borana”, focuses on the sustainable harvesting of aloe vera (a spiky, succulent plant that can be used to make cosmetics and medicines), soap making, and the harvesting of natural gums and resins. An unusual feature of the initiative is that it is led by women, but men are also involved.

Both the women and men have learned how to produce soap and manage the business. They have also been trained in gender awareness.

“We have developed a really good level of cooperation and understanding,” says Jilo. “I have learned how to make soap and manage money, and about gender issues. Afterwards I passed on what I had learned to my husband. He now encourages me to take part in meetings and activities. It is not culturally appropriate for men to cook or fetch firewood or water in this part of Ethiopia. Although my husband does not cook, he will tend the fire under the pot while I am at meetings. At home, I apply what I have learned about gender equality with my children, both the boys and the girls. I also share these lessons with other women when we collect firewood and water.

“Soap-making has brought a big change to our community. Before, we would have to travel a long way to the market in Bake just to buy soap. Now we can buy it here. The next step is to improve our marketing capacity and to open a shop to sell our soap.”

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was profitable. Now they also share the work. By working in groups, the producers can supply buyers who are interested in large quantities of jatropha seeds. Strengthening the women's group was a prerequisite for this success. Training, introducing new technologies and establishing collection points meant the group could launch a new business.

Organizing and forming associations can lead to benefits: whether it be for lobbying for better rules, securing a supply of quality ingredients (Ricomida in Bolivia), or to assure better prices by producing collectively and selling to bigger buyers (jatropha in Tanzania). Where cooperation is useful, development agencies should invest in strengthening forms of association. That may mean developing laws, rules and regulations, promoting leadership, market analysis and intelligence, product development, and team building. Development partners can also act as a broker, linking producer organizations with potential buyers.

Exclusively female organizations are not necessary: the producer groups in the honey value chains in Rwanda (Case 5.1) and Ethiopia (Case 5.2) have both men and women members. The jatropha case in Tanzania is of particular interest because it was women who started producing the crop, and men joined the groups only later. In the mixed groups, special attention is paid to securing the position of women on an equal basis.

Successful female entrepreneurs are good role models for other women in their communities. An effective way to support women entrepreneurs is linking them to other businesswomen, thus enabling mentoring, coaching, experience sharing and learning. Connecting business women creates an important support network. In some countries networks of female entrepreneurs exist; in Bolivia, the Ricomida women are members of a larger network of *mujeres emprendedoras* (women entrepreneurs). In many countries networks organize business challenges; an example is the "Women in Business Challenge" of the Dutch-based Business in Development Network. Other organizations promote matchmaking between women entrepreneurs at an international level, for example the Dutch network MYente ([www.yente.org/en/page/myente](http://www.yente.org/en/page/myente)).

### Ensuring business development services and technical support

Women entrepreneurs often need support to develop their businesses. Different types of support may be required, ranging from training to specific advice. Examples include:

- Business planning, including the development of business plans
- Business skill development: general management skills as well as specifics, like negotiation.
- Financial management, personnel management, etc.

In many countries, producer organizations provide such services. Women should use them. But the services have to be adjusted to the specific needs and situations of women. It is important to consider when and where training is provided, as well as group composition. Sometimes groups with only women are better; in

### Box 5.9. Rahel Tamrat: From adviser to honey entrepreneur in Ethiopia



As a manager of an NGO on the outskirts of Addis Ababa, Rahel Tamrat used to advise women on how to keep bees in modern hives, and how to sell their products. Now she has gone into business herself, as a honey entrepreneur.

She started by taking a business approach to the services she was providing. Instead of providing advice and finding buyers for free, she quit her job and started charging for her services, and began buying, processing and selling honey.

Next, she decided to scale up her business. That meant developing a network of outgrowers. She chose to do this in Jimma Zone, in southwestern Ethiopia. This area is good for both bees and business: it has a varied vegetation cover and has good roads. She has also benefited from a honey working group that is part of an SNV programme to support businesses and market access. In 2008–9, Rahel trained 300 women beekeepers in the Jimma area on how to make hives, manage bees, and harvest honey. She now chairs the Oromia Region Apiculture Board.

She has started a company, RAHIMAR Plc, to continue her business. She has established a honey processing plant in the town of Mojo, and RAHIMAR is beginning to export honey to Europe.

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mixed groups it may be better to have at least half women to ensure they feel comfortable and speak up.

In addition, women often need technical training. This may be formal training, or it can be in the form of individual support or coaching, as in the Bolivia case, where individual restaurateurs receive advice. In Tanzania, the women got training on how to produce jatropha, a new product. This training also included government extension workers, who are to continue to provide advisory services. The women also got help in connecting to markets and dealing with buyers. In all these cases the producer organization or association proved a good channel for such training.

The stories of the honey trader, Rahel (Box 5.9) and the dairy producer and trader, Doña Esmilda (Box 5.10) show that when women see opportunities and get the right support or access to services, they can become successful entrepreneurs. Both these women have created jobs and increased their profits significantly.

**Ensure access to finance.** Loans are often vital to expand a business. But getting a loan is not always easy for women, as many lenders have requirements (such as collateral) that they cannot fulfil as land titles and other assets are often not registered under women's names. Some organizations apply a system of seed capital. To make financial services accessible to women, development initiatives may need to collaborate with a microfinance institution or bank. Creating a guarantee fund (where the development organization sets aside some money to guarantee the loan) may be useful. The size of the loan will depend on the type, size and development stage of the enterprise.

## Box 5.10. Lactéos Doña Esmilda: From small trader to dairy entrepreneur in Nicaragua



Little did Santos Esmilda Rizo think that one day she would be supplying a big supermarket chain. She used to be a teacher in a rural school in the municipality of El Sauce in the department of León, in the western part of Nicaragua. To supplement her salary, she started buying cheese curd in the villages to sell in town. Realizing that there was demand, started to buy milk to make her own curd, starting with 20 litres at a time, and expanding to batches of 200 litres. She made her cheese at home, and sold from there or in the local market.

With the support and training of the Millennium Challenge Account Nicaragua, she has become a successful entrepreneur, processing 1,000 litres of milk a day. She has started using new technology, pushing her productivity up. In October 2010 Lactéos Doña Esmilda, the company she founded, obtained a health license and barcode. With new, well-designed labels, she now sells curd and smoked and grilled cheese to supermarkets and other outlets.

The business employs four permanent staff, and her whole family is involved. Her income has gone up to around \$2,200 a year. She is economically independent, and her family is doing well: she is currently refurbishing the processing room and building a smoking oven and a water treatment system. She has got her first bank loan to invest in a professional display for her products.

When the Millennium Challenge Account started working in the livestock sector, it did not cover small-scale milk-processing activities and trading, because it did not think it was competitive. It thought that small, home-based processing plants serving the informal economy, mostly led by women, were not significant for development. Instead, it focused on linking milk producers with industrial processing plants.

But a gendered mapping of the dairy chain in western Nicaragua showed how important small-scale milk processing was in adding value, providing jobs and income, and ensuring that women controlled productive assets. The Council of the West, an organization of women leaders, used the survey results to persuade the Millennium Challenge Account management to reorient its investment to serve women entrepreneurs engaged in milk processing.

These processing businesses turn out to be very competitive. Many of them have been able to increase their competitiveness: with investments of only \$100–600, they have achieved the required internal rate of return of 18%, and their annual income has increased by an average of \$615. That makes them some of the most successful entrepreneurs of the whole Millennium Challenge Account Nicaragua programme.

Women milk processors like Esmilda have formally established their businesses, developed new products, created trade names, and obtained health permits and barcodes. They now have access to better markets such as supermarkets. By earning more, they have increased their access and control to productive assets, and they have created employment for many others, mainly women.

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**Ensure government support.** Especially when introducing a new crop or production process, good relationships with the government are vital. This is illustrated by the jatropha case in Tanzania.

### **Supporting women and men in making decisions together**

When supporting new business ventures by women, it is wise to involve their husbands and/or male household members from the start. This will help avoid household conflicts.

Special attention is needed to develop an entrepreneurial attitude among women. Many women invest all their profits in the needs of their (extended) family; that puts the survival and growth of the business at risk. In Nicaragua awareness training helped the women reflect on their traditional role of serving others in society, and encouraged them to develop a new vision of a woman as a determining her own life. The training emphasized that family responsibilities have to be shared by the men and women in the household. For the same reason, it is useful for women's training in negotiation skills and conflict resolution cover both household and business situations. It is also important to separate family expenditure and business accounts.

### **Conclusions**

At the individual level, the cases in this chapter show how being a successful entrepreneur increases women's self-esteem and strengthens her position in relation to her husband and other men in the family and community. The cases also show that men can increasingly participate in their wives' businesses. These changes affect traditional patterns of interaction between men and women. Household welfare has also improved, especially in terms of children's schooling.

The two cases depict women in new business initiatives, and two of the boxes describe individual entrepreneurs who were able to improve their businesses. Whether they are expanding an existing business or starting a new one, the business opportunities must fit the lives and responsibilities of women. This may mean it requires only limited assets (such as land ownership), or be close to home (because of women's limited mobility). Improving or starting new businesses is easiest when there is not too much resistance from men or the community, or where men can be involved without reducing the women's benefits.

Whether female entrepreneurs are successful depends largely on ownership: do they really have the power to decide on their actions? It also depends on access to credit or other services and assets they need. To make the strategy fail-safe, there should be enough control to prevent a male takeover of the chain activities once they become profitable.

Focusing on female entrepreneurs is a good strategy if the identification of business opportunities or value chain mapping reveals opportunities for women in market-oriented businesses. Such a scenario means that women can develop profitable businesses. The opportunity must fit the situation and capabilities

of the women involved, in terms of the time they have available, their access to required resources (such as land and capital), and mobility. It is important that women are interested in investing in and continually improving their businesses, since we are talking about entrepreneurship and enterprise development, and not only about increasing incomes. Supporting or assisting women to become successful entrepreneurs is the aim of this strategy.

As women improve their economic positions and start creating jobs for others, their social position also improves. That can lead to women taking part in what have traditionally been men's roles in decision-making. Men start to accept women on an equal footing, and women increasingly take on leadership positions.

### Situating the arguments

This chapter is very much about supporting women to become entrepreneurs as a means to both **fight poverty** better and because it is **good for business** and the economy. We also see the importance of ensuring a market opportunity for a female-owned business is a necessary step, which brings in the argument that women can present **new market opportunities as suppliers**.



## 5.3 Conclusions

Chapter 5 has looked at a strategy of creating new spaces for women to engage in development: either by positioning women in male-dominated chains, or by supporting female entrepreneurship. This strategy is gender-specific in that it targets one gender – women – and it is gender-redistributive in that it seeks to transform existing gender norms by allowing women to succeed in typically male-dominated domains. Looking back at the cases and experiences presented in this section, we can draw a number of conclusions.

To understand what the strategy of creating space can and cannot do, it is helpful to distinguish between three objectives: chain performance, women's empowerment, and poverty reduction and rebuilding livelihoods (as we did in Chapter 4.5).

**Chain performance** means improving the performance of the whole chain and adding value by increasing women's involvement in traditionally male activities and in entrepreneurship. This impact is related to the business argument and improving chain performance.

We have seen in this chapter that promoting gender equality is not only an issue of rights, but also a matter of improving business performance. Women play an important role in improving quality and business performance (efficiency and effectiveness). Taking the economic issues first reduces confrontations from farmer's organizations, the private sector and even governments that restrict women's rights.

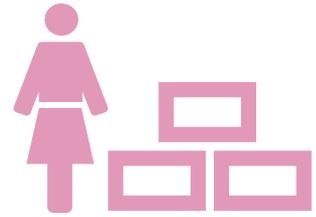
**Women's empowerment** means improving the performance of and power held by women in the chain, household or community. This intended impact is linked to the social justice argument. In this chapter we see that as women's work in male-dominated chains is recognized and rewarded, women's roles are transformed. Training and support helps women to play these different roles.

**Poverty reduction and rebuilding livelihoods** implies supporting women in vulnerable contexts to earn money and build their self-esteem. This objective links to poverty alleviation arguments. In Chapter 5 we approach female entrepreneurs and women in male-dominated chains not really from a strategy of rebuilding livelihoods, but more to look at opportunities for women and earn a better living. We have looked at opportunities for women who already have the ambition to become entrepreneurs and to get the recognition they deserve in male-dominated chains.



# 6

## Organizing for change



*Main contributors: Netsayi Noris Mudege, Isaac Bekalo, Rhiannon Pyburn, Anna Laven, Juan Pablo Solis, Dana Starkey, Paineto Baluku, Amit Kumar Singh, Shipra Deo and Zonia C. Narito*

Women do a lot of the production, handling and processing of crops. Nonetheless, men are often seen as the “real” farmers, they get most of the technical assistance and extension services, even for tasks and crops that women manage. This is particularly true for cash crops such as coffee, which are typically considered to be men’s crops, even though women do most of the work in production and management. However, when it comes to marketing, women become invisible.

This creates inefficiencies in human capital and productivity (Mayoux 2010). For example, information about new techniques often does not reach the women who do the work. That reduces production volumes and product quality, so harms processors and retailers as well as producers.

The previous two chapters revealed similarities in terms of the kinds of interventions undertaken, as well as in the conditions needed for success for a particular strategy. In this chapter we highlight four of these conditions for success:

- Capacity building
- Collective action
- Sensitization of men
- Access to finance.

This chapter draws very much on the concepts of **agency** and **structure**. **Capacity development** increases productivity and allows women to reap more benefits from their labour. Capacity building for women goes beyond just technical productive capacities to include literacy, the ability to organize, and leadership skills, among others, which will enable women to more effectively work and prosper in their value chain contributions as well as learning to challenge inequalities in other areas of their lives.

**Chapter 6.1** looks into these issues. It focuses on how to build women’s agency through equipping them with skills that will increase their productivity and decision making power.

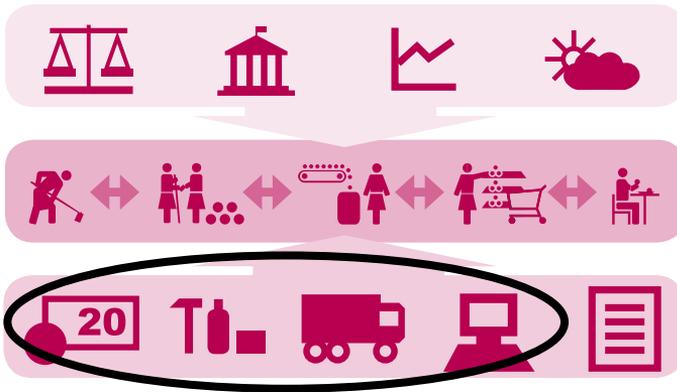


Figure 6.1. Organizing for change focuses on the chain supporters

The other three subchapters look at changing societal structures in such a way that the context becomes supportive, opening opportunities for fostering women's agency, rather than hindering it.

**Chapter 6.2** turns to **collective action** – women coming together to learn, market their produce, have decision-making power and speak with a united voice.

**Chapter 6.3** looks at the **sensitization of men** in communities, producer organizations and development organizations. It demonstrates the need for combining interventions in a value chain with sensitization of men as a way of dealing with potential resistance by men towards interventions and their impacts.

**Chapter 6.4** focuses on **financial support services** such as banks and microfinance institutions. It discusses how these service providers can support value chains in ways that recognize the importance and stimulate the effective participation of women, so allowing women to become more competitive participants in value chains.

Chapter 6 as a whole addresses organizing for change from both individual and structural entry points so that value chains can become more woman-friendly. It targets people and services surrounding the value chain (Figure 6.1).

## 6.1 Capacity building

Meaningful participation in value chains requires that women have skills, access to and control over resources, and are sufficiently confident to make decisions. But we know from the cases presented so far that women tend to be underserved. This subchapter explores capacity building as a way to empower women in value chains, building their agency to act. Many different kinds of capacity building initiatives help achieve these goals. For example, becoming literate can increase confidence; business training can improve planning and financial management; agricultural training can raise quality or productivity. Capacity building also involves provision of infrastructure to improve productivity.

This chapter also explores the role of different capacity building initiatives in addressing and promoting gender equality. For instance, does building women's capacities improve their position in the value chain? Does it challenge gender inequalities within families? If so, what kinds of capacity building deliver these results?

### Box 6.1. Capacity building

**Entry point.** Capacity building for women is an essential step towards changing value chains

to benefit women more while at the same time serving the need to make a profit.

**Why do it?** Capacity building increases women's skills and confidence in taking up chain activities and leadership roles within value chains and their communities. Capacity development helps women access markets and services, and improves chain performance. Moreover, it can provide the foundation that lets women make independent decisions in the chain, the household and the community.

**How to do it?** Different kinds of capacity building play a role. It is important to equip women with a variety of skills, and to combine capacity building strategies so they can compete in the value chain and make their own choices. Examples include functional literacy, business literacy, market and financial management, soil and crop management, storage and processing management, leadership training and other kinds of capacity building as requested by the group.

**When is it a good strategy?** Capacity building is a good choice when there is clear understanding of the problem and knowledge gap. It is important that women already have access to markets, or capacity building helps them access more profitable or stable markets. Capacity building needs to be complemented with policy support and a supportive infrastructure and environment. That may require multiple interventions.

**Conditions for success.**

- Target training to a group: collectives provide women with a platform to discuss issues with peers, set priorities, and decide on a line of action.
- Analyse capacity and training needs.
- Link women to service providers.
- Ensure that a supportive policy environment is in place.
- Involve men and the community.

## Box 6.2. What do women like to eat?

The 30 women had gathered for their first training on vegetable production.

“Please introduce yourselves, and say what your favourite food is”, I said.

“My son likes *samosa*” (a type of stuffed pastry), said one, “and I eat it too”.

“Lentils and flat bread... anything that fills your stomach is good”, said another.

“When you are hungry, then everything is good”, said a third.

I wondered how difficult it was for them to give a simple answer, “I like...”

The women probably never had a chance to think about themselves. Every day they cook for their family – but they just don’t know what they like to eat.

I always ask questions like this during training courses. I do it to get them to think about themselves, what they want to do, to begin to make decisions, to realize that their opinions matter and that their priorities are important.

*More information: Shipra Deo, Agribusiness Systems International, India*

There are many ways to build women’s capacities to participate effectively and benefit equally from participation in value chains. Before embarking on a series of capacity-building initiatives, it is a good idea to assess needs so that the initiatives can be properly targeted – as will be illustrated by cases in this subchapter. Training programmes can then be designed for the various actors, male and female, within the value chain. Training programmes may include demonstration units, exposure visits, field days, gender training and other kinds of training.

Box 6.2 illustrates one challenge for doing a comprehensive needs assessment: women may not be able to articulate what their needs are.

This example suggests that women’s difficulty in putting their own needs and desires first starts well before their work in the value chain. It also illustrates the facilitator’s role in promoting change: in this case, asking a simple question to encourage women to reflect on themselves.

This chapter contains two cases and a box:

- **Case 6.1, Women rice farmers in Mali master their crop**, describes how the Finkolo women’s union is improving its rice production and marketing.
- **Case 6.2, A strong coffee from western Uganda**, describes how women and men are now collaborating rather than competing over the coffee harvest.
- **Box 6.3, Fighting chicken disease in Kenya**, relates how a capacity-building programme triggered by a technical problem (Newcastle disease in chickens) enabled women to learn and grow as leaders.

## Case 6.1 Women rice farmers in Mali master their crop

*Dana Starkey*

In early October all rice fields in Mali – and there are many hectares of this staple grain – are bustling with activity, with village men carefully cutting the green stalks and gathering them in bundles.<sup>1</sup> But it is a different picture in Sikasso, in the south of the country, where rice is considered a “woman’s crop”. The women in this region grow rice on small plots (0.25 to 1 hectare) for household consumption and sell any surplus. The men usually grow cash crops such as cotton, potatoes and corn.

The poor rice harvests can be blamed on many problems: poor soil quality, poor crop management skills, insufficient inputs and agricultural equipment. To address these and to improve their rice production, 36 women’s associations (with over 800 members) joined a women’s union, Finkolo Ganadougou. Many women are illiterate, so they find it difficult to keep records and share information – both necessary for successful marketing. Plus, women know little about the male-dominated rice market. They sell their surplus rice individually, mainly in local markets.

After struggling for three years, the Finkolo women’s union decided to seek external help. The mayor helped connect them with USAID’s Integrated Initiatives for Economic Growth in Mali programme (IICEM), implemented by Abt Associates Inc.

### Helping improve rice yields

To help the women of Sikasso increase their rice yields and sell their output competitively, IICEM had to first understand the challenges they faced. In partnership with GREFA, a local NGO, it assessed the needs and planned a programme to improve the union’s capacity. Starting in 2008, activities included:

- **Basic literacy and numeracy training.** These are essential skills for farmers to access, record and share information, especially when selling produce.
- **Crop management.** This included training on organic and chemical fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides, and seed selection; field visits for the women; and test plots of potatoes and other vegetables. These were “cascade trainings”: a few people were trained, who then disseminated what they had learned to the rest of the group.
- **Market and storage management.** Training aimed to improve the women’s ability to negotiate prices with input providers and cereal wholesalers. By

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bulking rice, the women could sell as a group through the Finkolo union, taking advantage of price fluctuations in the cereal market and negotiating better deals on inputs (loans, fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides). Additional topics included measuring and recording of market prices and sales, documenting and organizing rice stocks, networking at cereal fairs, and managing and renting production equipment. The training also covered the warehouse receipts programme, which allows producers to store rice at harvest time and to sell it later at when the price is higher.

- **Improvements in equipment, facilities and technology** included the construction of four dams (including training on how to manage them), three warehouses, a literacy centre and a mill. Equipment provided to the union included scales, a tractor and a machine for weeding. Members were taught how to manage and maintain this equipment. In addition, the women farmers learned how to improve their rice production and processing.

IICEM and GREFA also acted as guarantor for loans, helping women secure funds to purchase farming inputs.

## Improvements

The combination of training, equipment, facilities and technology benefited the women in various ways.

More than 180 women learned to read and write in the Bambara language, so becoming functionally literate and better prepared to participate in higher-level activities in the value chain.

Rice yields increased by 63%: from 0.8 tonnes to 1.3 tonnes per hectare. More than 60 women expand into a new product, potatoes, producing over 80 tonnes on five acres. This crop diversification increased their incomes and made them more stable.

The new facilities enabled the women to earn more from their crops, and provided another source of income, money from renting out equipment. The warehouses made it possible to store rice in one central location and made the warehouse receipts programme more efficient. The price per kilogram that the women's union could obtain on the market more than doubled, from 60 to 150 FCFA (from \$0.12 to 0.30). The dams expanded the area where rice could be grown from 150 to 750 hectares.

The training has strengthened the women's confidence and abilities to take additional initiatives. They have started to expand into other products (e.g., the traditional men's cash crop, potatoes) and to diversify into milling and parboiling rice.

A potential weakness is the increased need for farm inputs. Buying these requires farmers to take out loans. A poor harvest could bring grave consequences to the rice farmers of Sikasso.

## Analysing the change

Getting the mayor's support for the union's promotion of rice stocks was an important first step in improving the rice chain and women's participation in it. This change (**structure**) allowed external parties to get involved, especially in developing the union's capacity. That in turn allowed **chain activities** to improve significantly – both in terms of rice output and starting to produce potatoes. Developing the women's basic skills and ability to negotiate with other chain actors (**chain governance**) made them more confident and capable (**agency**).

Women are now more embedded in the rice chain, which brings new benefits. But this does not come without risks: they are also more dependent on bank loans to purchase inputs.

A diverse array of capacity-building activities resulted in improvements in production and storage techniques and access to and use of better equipment. That benefited the rice chain (better production and marketing results) and the women

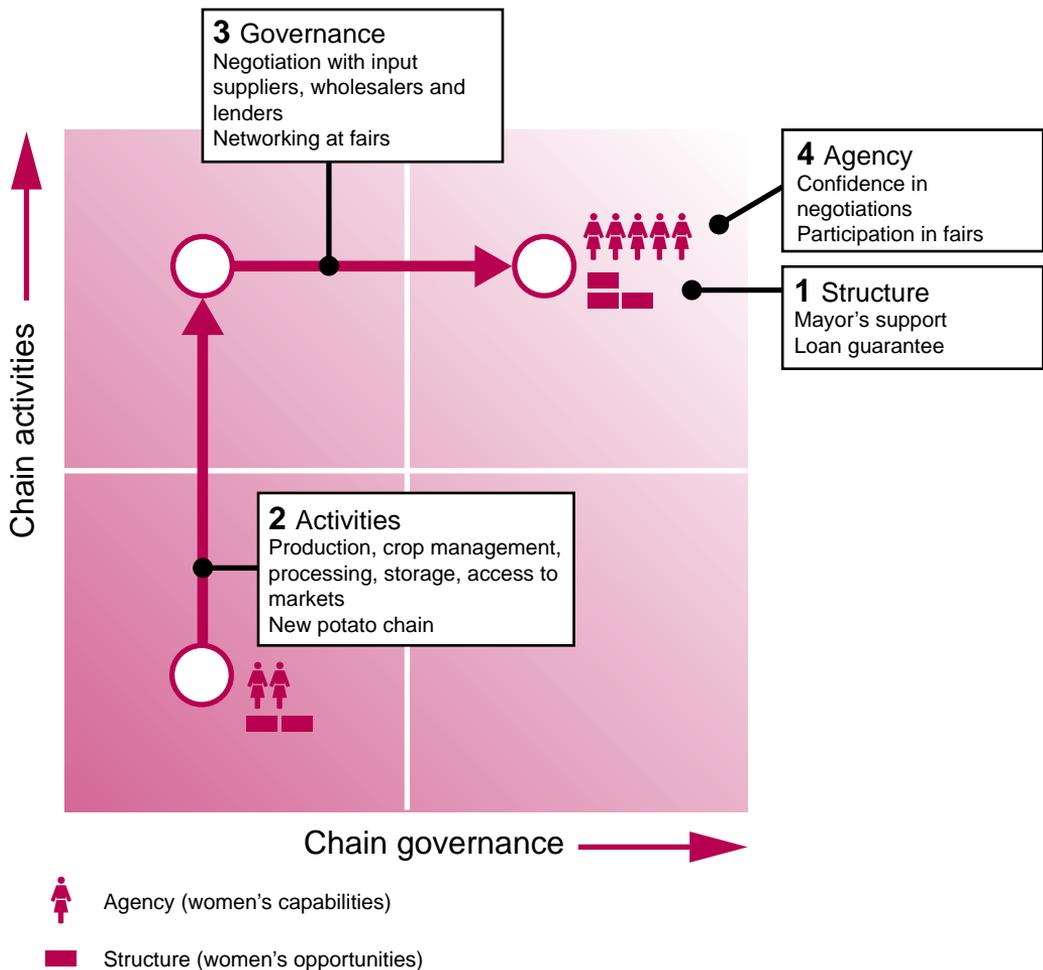


Figure 6.2. Changes in the rice chain in Mali

involved (who got additional income from the improved outputs and their entry into a new chain). The training built the women's confidence and skills in terms of documentation, production, marketing and negotiating prices.

The biggest change was in chain activities: the women grew rice better and got involved in more chain activities (marketing, negotiating prices) as well as entering a new chain (potatoes). Chain governance was the second most important change. The women negotiated directly with other chain actors and participated in cereal fairs. However, these changes in chain governance were possible only because of the training and renewed sense of confidence that comes with skill development. The change in governance is inextricably linked to the women's new abilities.

## Case 6.2 A strong coffee from western Uganda

*Paineto Baluku*

“Good morning Grace! Up again so early?” Sara greets her friend on her way to fetch water.

“Hi Sara!” Grace calls back. “The week is almost done and I still have not got to half of the coffee trees. My husband comes back in two weeks, you know!”

“Ah, yes! You better hurry and sell the coffee before he returns. Otherwise you will again have no money to save in our women’s group.”

### **Lots of work, but little benefit**

An odd exchange? Perhaps, but a typical one in Kasese district, in western Uganda. Coffee, the main cash crop, is considered a “man’s crop”. The men plant the coffee trees on the land they own – usually plots of between 0.5 and 1 acre that they have inherited. Many work outside the area, returning only to sell the beans and collect the proceeds. Everything in between is done by the village women: tending the coffee garden, picking, drying, hulling, sorting beans (often even carrying filled coffee bags to traders). But they do not own the land or collect the profit. Anticipating their husbands’ return at harvest time, the women race to harvest unripe coffee beans. It is a perverse competition for resources within the family, as the unripe beans fetch a low price. It is a disastrous lose–lose situation.

In 1999, several local women’s groups formed the Bukonzo Joint Cooperative, to improve coffee production and coffee quality. Today the cooperative unifies 96 groups and their 3,500 members, over 80% of whom are women. For a long time, the cooperative’s main strategy was to educate its members by sharing information at monthly meetings. But several years ago, the members started to feel that progress was slowing. They also identified some common problems that women faced: unequal property rights, unequal workload and distribution of benefits, and domestic violence. But they did not see these as connected with the stalling coffee business.

In 2007, Oxfam Novib introduced the cooperative’s members to the gender-sensitive approach to analysing value chains. The members realized why they had not been able to improve either the quality of their coffee or their production volume, despite all their efforts to improve their farming skills. The problem was that the women farmers did not have good access to markets, they did not control resources such as land and coffee trees, and they did not get a fair share of the proceeds.

## Training for change

With support from Oxfam Novib, the cooperative designed a capacity-building programme for its members. This focused on improving women's access to and control of land and trees, and access to large coffee markets. It sought to increase the quality and volume of coffee, improve marketing, and boost the women's position in the value chain. The programme consisted of various activities:

The Uganda Change Agent Association, a national NGO with extensive experience in capacity building, conducted a series of workshops (two-week sessions over a period of four months) with members of the cooperative. These cover organization, farm management, record-keeping and leadership skills. After returning to their communities, the trainees tried to apply what they had learned, and discussed their experiences at the next training session. The courses also introduced ways to analyse value chains from a gender perspective. A total of 19 members were trained as peer trainers; they subsequently trained another 1,500 members of their groups.

The Bukonzo Joint Cooperative mobilized government extension officers to give technical training on coffee farming. This covered soil and water management, pruning of trees, and harvesting practices.

The project partners and an international consultant gave a series of training courses using the Gender Action Learning System capacity-building tool (see Chapter 10.1). The consultant trained 40 people (32 women); they in turn trained other farmers. Over 1,000 farmers (729 of them women) have attended such courses.

To improve access to the market and to provide women farmers with personal experiences in trading and selling, 28 women and seven men farmers were trained in negotiation and marketing. Ten women and four men farmers went on exposure visits to big markets in Kampala. On their return they shared their experiences with other members of the Bukonzo cooperative (672 group members, of whom 550 were women).

To promote women's leadership, quotas were written into the cooperative's bylaws mandating that 3 out of 5 members of the groups' executive committees should be women, and that the executive board of the cooperative must have a majority of women members (6 out of 9).

## A fresh brew

**Output.** These efforts have borne fruit. Coffee quality has risen, and production nearly doubled each year, from 107 tons in 2007, to 212 tons in 2008, to 385 tons in 2009.

**Land ownership** was more difficult to tackle. In a small percentage (8%) of the cooperative members' households, the woman increased her control over land. Some took advantage of a government provision for joint husband-and-wife leases. Others signed agreements with local government on shared land ownership. These are not huge changes, but nonetheless they are a step forward.

**Social benefits.** The villages and families have benefited strongly. The men have started to return to the villages and spend more time with their families. They also help more with the chores and the children, and spend more time tending the fields. Around half the cooperative members reported that relations in the home improved significantly.

**Improved efficiency and marketing** brought a many-fold increase in family income. The women increased their profits by cutting out middlemen and selling directly to the cooperative or to bigger markets. This gave them more control over resources and the ability to save money in their groups. Harvesting unripe coffee fell by 30%, and a few couples have started to share the work and the proceeds equally.

### Analysing the change

The first step was related to **agency**: the programme trained the women in financial skills. That made them more able to control the income and decide on spending. These skills enabled the women to take on new **chain activities** and boost their coffee production and quality. These two building blocks then led to a big change in **chain governance**: the coffee growers were organized, and women

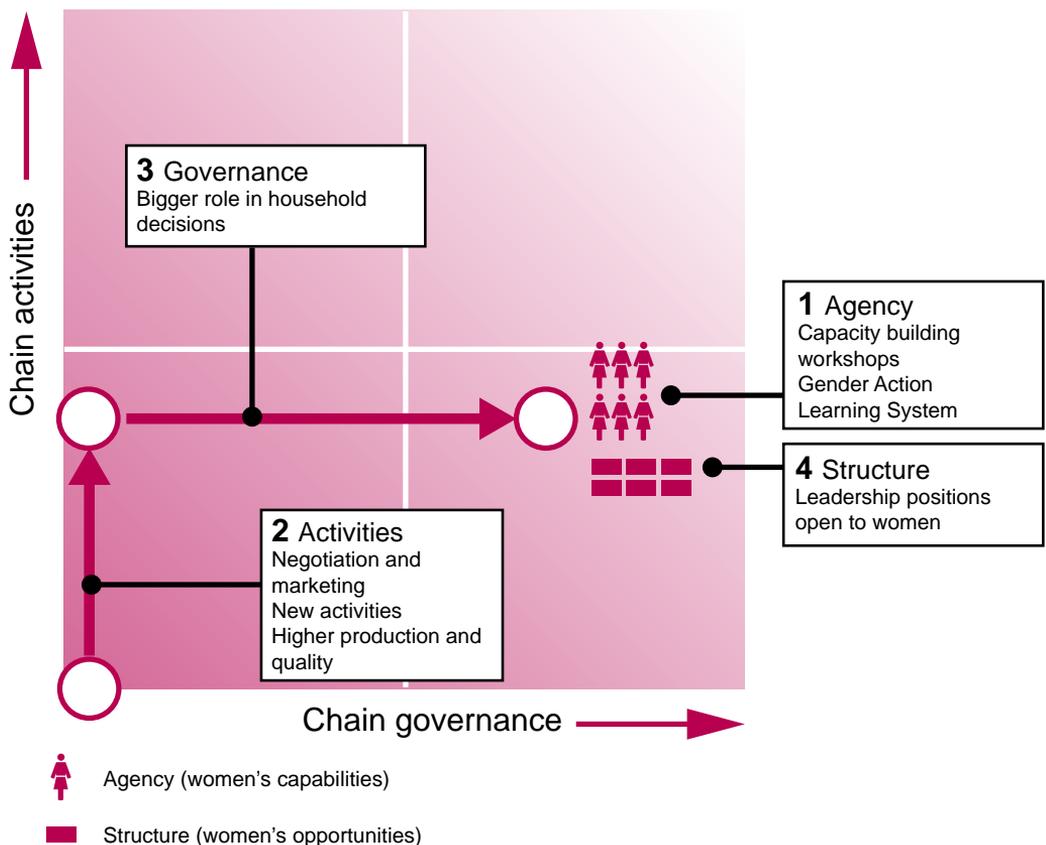


Figure 6.3. Changes in the coffee chain in Uganda

took leadership in the chain, and quality control improved. **Structural** changes in the household followed, with women having a bigger share in decisions and a few becoming joint owners of land.

The capacity building addressed both technical issues such as coffee quality and output, as well as the position of women in the community. Improving women's farming skills was not enough to improve their performance in the chain. But increasing the women's decision-making power in the household gave both women and men an incentive to work together to improve their production and income. It replaced the previous competition between husbands and wives over household resources.

While addressing agency and chain activities were a first, critical step, the changes in chain governance and structure were more important. Note that the approach was directed both towards women and men. Together, they built a new understanding of the coffee chain and their household relations, so became able to build a more resilient household economy.

## New abilities, new capacity

Box 6.3 gives another example of how capacity building efforts can have a major impact on the life of women and on business. Education and organizational strengthening helped to fight chicken disease in a remote and impoverished area in Kenya.

In both the Mali and Uganda cases in this subchapter, limited skills in land management, production and other areas prevented women from taking a bigger role in the value chains. Where women were traditionally involved in certain activities (such as rice cultivation in Mali or raising chickens in Kenya, Box 6.3), they did not know how to improve their productivity, so were constantly relegated to smaller markets, lower prices and lower quantities.

The most significant changes related to capacity building were the entry of women into male-dominated markets, increased productivity, women taking more leadership roles within cooperative and communities, as well as an increasing respect for women by families and community members.

Capacity building and access to technical services made it possible for the women to learn new skills: how to negotiate with input suppliers and lending institutions, increase and diversify their crops, process, store and package products, negotiate with buyers and market in bulk, and record information. Training also allowed the women to share their knowledge with their peers and strengthen the group's independence. New skills and new technologies cut their work time considerably, freeing them to spend more quality time with their families.

With limited literacy, business skills and knowledge on soil and crop management, with inadequate farm tools, women cannot produce optimally. This was the case for the Finkolo women's association in Mali. Low productivity meant low income and greater dependence on men's incomes, skewing the balance of power within households and communities in favour of men. Capacity building brought the opportunity for more independence and more balanced household relationships.

The women also increased their **ownership and control** of tangible resources such as land, animals, warehouses and processing and agricultural equipment, as well as intangibles such as cooperatives and other organizations. That both boosted their production and gave them more control over their incomes – as Box 6.3 on chicken farmers in Kenya illustrates. In the Uganda case, the capacity building resulted in improved coffee output and quality, and bigger benefits for producers. Facilities such as warehouses and scales let the women's union in Mali store their rice and sell it when it would fetch a higher price.

### When is it a good strategy?

Capacity building works best and can reach the most people by targeting groups rather than individuals. This occurred in all the cases described in this book. Groups can be organized in different ways, depending on the goals. If a group already exists, it may be best to discuss the members' interests, challenges and goals. The groups can then be reorganized if needed, as illustrated by the Mali

### Box 6.3. Fighting chicken disease in Kenya

Chickens are an important part of life in the Kenyan countryside: over 90% of rural Kenyans raise at least a few birds. For some families, chickens are a vital part of their livelihoods. That is especially so in Makueni district, a dry area 150 km southeast of the capital, Nairobi. Very few crops can grow here, and unreliable rainfall often leads to a failed harvest. So chickens offer a path out of poverty, especially for women. The area boasts 700,000 chickens, most in small flocks kept by individual households. It is the women's job to look after them. A healthy flock can mean a reasonable income as well as food on the table. Chickens also make good gifts for family and friends.

But the chickens are not always healthy. A big problem is Newcastle disease, an ailment that spreads quickly through a flock and can kill many birds in a short time. Poor management, a fragmented market, little reliable information on buyers and prices, and an erratic supply of chickens were other constraints. All these make it hard for the women of Makueni to earn an income from poultry.

In 2006, a well-coordinated effort began to educate and organize local farmers. This was implemented by the Danish NGO Agribusiness Development, the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute and the Ministry of Livestock Development. The farmers formed poultry interest groups, each with around 50 members – mostly women. The groups elected leaders and made their own rules. They held weekly meetings, and members could get services such as extension, research, veterinary supplies and microcredit. They were trained how to provide good feed and clean water, select eggs, care for brooding hens, and rear chicks. They also learned about marketing, the role of traders and market information. But most important, two women in each group were trained to administer a vaccine against the dreaded Newcastle disease.

#### Results

As a result, the incidence of Newcastle disease has declined significantly. Before, the disease killed 75% of the chickens; now, it is less than 10%. Chicken numbers have risen hugely. Marketing has improved, with groups selling in bulk to regular traders each week. Incomes have gone up: a single group now sells an average of 300 chickens and 4,000 eggs a month, earning each household some KSh 3,000 (€30) a month. Every group member now keeps records of her production and transactions.

Better-informed women administer the vaccines themselves, rather than having to rely on outsiders. The groups are well-organized, have a good process of making decisions, and have strong leaders and strong partnerships with other stakeholders who work with chickens.

The benefits have even spilled over into other farm enterprises. The group members now use poultry manure on their fields, boosting production of maize and sorghum as well as vegetables and other crops.

#### Lesson

Even in remote, impoverished regions, it is possible to achieve dramatic improvements in food security and the position of women by providing good education and help with organizing.

*More information: Simon Omondi, Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, [www.kari.org](http://www.kari.org)*

rice case. Some of the group members can then be trained as trainers; they in turn pass on what they know to their fellow members. Local project partners facilitate monitoring and feedback sessions.

This strategy is also effective when there is a clear understanding of exactly what the problem is and what needs to change. For example, the women chicken farmers in Kenya were not excluded intentionally from the value chains; they did not know how to prevent a disease that reduced the quality and quantity of chickens they produced.

Women and their organizations need to be linked to outside institutions and markets. Creating links may involve financial institutions, input suppliers, the local media and governmental agencies. These strengthen the entire value chain and expand the group's network. In the case of the Finkolo union in Mali, the mayor used the local radio station to promote the women's rice stocks and notify wholesalers. This improved the women's participation in the chain. This shows that capacity building has to be done in a more holistic way through a careful assessment of how women and their needs are represented throughout the chain. In the Ugandan coffee case, the cooperative also linked with outside organizations for support.

Capacity building has to be consistent across each link in the value chain. Remember, though, that training is not a magic bullet. Alone, it is rarely enough. Multiple interventions in skills, technology innovation, capital investment and infrastructural support are usually necessary.

## **Conclusions**

This chapter has focused on training to equip women with a variety of skills so they can be part of and compete in the value chain. Skills mentioned in the cases include functional literacy, business literacy, marketing, storage and processing, and leadership. Increasing quality and production levels is not necessarily the goal. Capacity building strengthens and diversifies women's knowledge of each linkage in the chain, allowing them to become more independent.

Community empowerment and collective action may also be a vital part of capacity building. In the two cases in this subchapter, these directly addressed gender issues in the community, providing a supportive environment for women and men to challenge gender inequalities within value chains, homes and communities. Because of discrimination in education and society, women may lack the technical skills they need to engage in value chains. They tend to lack control over land and other resources, and extension services tend to target men. As a result, women often produce small amounts of poor-quality crops – further reinforcing the perception that they are not capable farmers.

Improving the technical and marketing skills of women farmers will not yield the full desired effect if their access and control over land, resources and income are not also improved. Changing their situation may also include providing equipment and physical infrastructure: dams, warehouses, scales, processing

equipment and farm machinery. These can go a long way in enabling women to take part in a value chain.

Overcoming these structural issues requires collective action (such as organizing producers' associations or self-help groups) to help individuals meet their goals and speak with one voice to challenge inequality and advocate for change.

### Situating the arguments

The starting point for many capacity building efforts is that women tend to be underserved, which creates inefficiencies. The business argument that **servicing women is good for business and for women** is very relevant for the cases that were highlighted in this chapter. In addition, capacity building is also done as a way of supporting women to learn how to challenge inequalities. This links to **social justice** arguments. For example in Uganda, although the focus was on productivity and increased incomes, the Gender Action Learning System tool encouraged men to participate in drawing gender maps and identifying areas for behavioural change towards their wives and daughters. One of the aims of this exercise was to reduce violence against women.

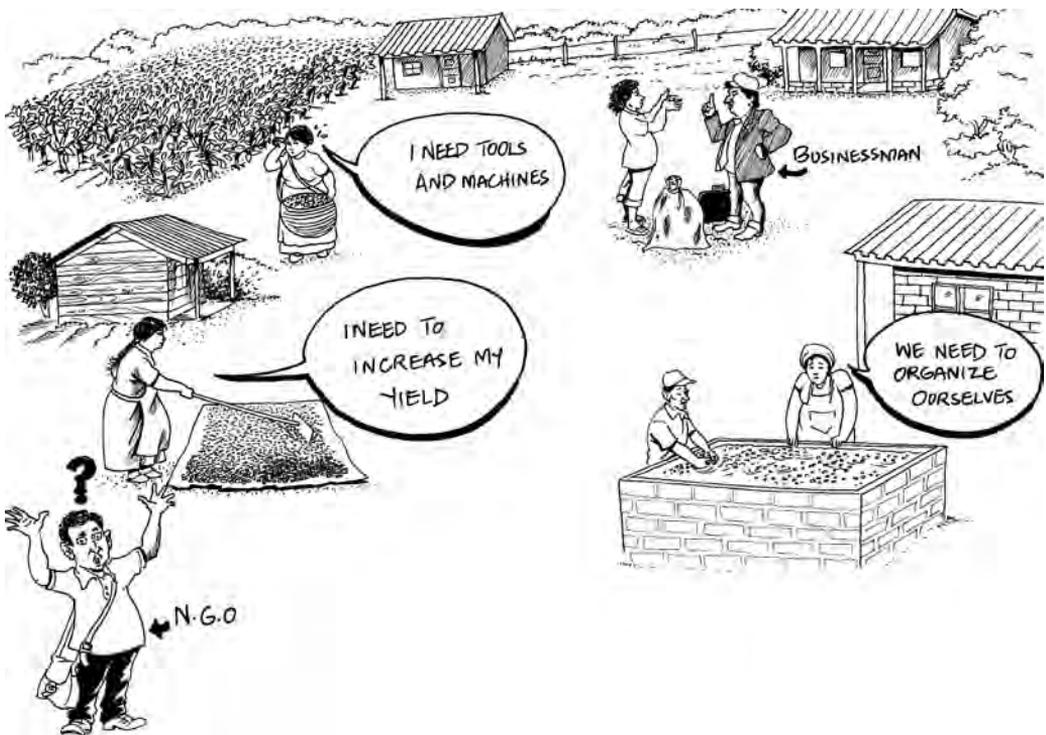


## 6.2 Collective action

Collective action is fundamental to the advancement of the welfare and rights of poor people, particularly women who are excluded from social, economic and political life. There are many different types of groups: producer organizations, self-help groups, cooperatives, marketing associations, etc. They may be loose and informal (e.g., for extension or information dissemination) or formal, with specific rules, regulations and structures. They may have single functions (such as sharing information or marketing produce) or many (purchasing inputs, organizing production, managing equipment, savings and loans, etc.). Some groups are women-only, while others have both men and women as members.

Collective action provides platforms for women to discuss issues, set priorities, make decisions, organize activities and develop leadership skills. When women are organized in groups, it is easier for capacity-building initiatives to target them rather than approaching them as individuals. Training can be better targeted by involving the group to identify its own needs, and more effective because of the mutual learning and reinforcement among members. And working in groups gives women not only skills but the confidence they need to improve their place in the value chain and in the community.

When it comes to marketing groups, by pooling their produce and selling in bulk, members can get the volumes needed to attract buyers, sell to new markets, and negotiate for higher prices. Groups can also be eligible to apply for loans, buy bulk inputs, and get other business services that are not open to individuals.



## Box 6.4. Collective action

**Entry point.** Jointly, smallholders can aggregate production, negotiate for better services and prices, facilitate access to services and inputs, share experiences, and build a peer network.

**Why do it?** Reasons for producers to act collectively include:

- To access credit: the group takes responsibility for paying back loans.
- Marketing: Bulking produce to get better prices and sell to bigger buyers.
- Access to services: Women can get training and services as a group.

For service providers and actors further along in the value chain (buyers, processors), doing business with organized producers is more efficient.

**How to do it?** This subchapter explores one kind of collective action, namely self-help groups in India.

**When is it a good strategy?** Collective action is applicable in many cases, for women as well as for men. Sometimes it makes sense to organize women-only groups, while other situations require mixed groups. Collective action makes sense where power is dispersed and where people doing the work do not benefit from it. By organizing collectively, women can leverage a larger share of a product's value.

This subchapter focuses on India, where one particular form of collective action, self-help groups, is a force to be reckoned with. These groups allow women to enter previously inaccessible markets and to build their capacities.

In India, self-help groups have become a core mechanism for shifting how society views women. This is not because India is the only nation where women engage



in collective action: it is not. But India's self-help groups are widespread and well-renowned, and they offer many lessons.

We present two cases and two boxes:

- **Case 6.3, Money does not grow on trees; it grows on the ground!** is about a woman-only group that makes rope from sabai, a type of grass. This group at first failed because men did not appreciate their wives' involvement; but it was later revived and is now flourishing.
- **Case 6.4, Aonla: Changing the lives of rural women in India**, relates how self-help groups have been revived and made more sustainable by empowering women in a broader range of activities.

### Box 6.5. Custard apples bear fruit

Custard apples grow wild in the forests in Nandurbar district in the western Indian state of Maharashtra. They are abundant and excellent quality. Local people from various tribal groups harvest the fruit for their own use, and sell the surplus. But their traditional harvesting practices damage the trees, they do not sort or grade the fruit, and they do not market as a group. That means they do not earn as much as they could.

Custard apples – the botanical name is *Annona squamosa* – look a little like artichokes. Inside the knobby, dull green skin is a sweet, yellow flesh. It is delicious. The fruit has to be handled carefully and sold soon after it is picked, otherwise it will spoil.

Since 2005, the BAIF Development Research Foundation, a large Indian NGO, has been helping the tribal people in 25 villages in Nandurbar district to harvest and market the fruit. The twin aims are to increase income and distribute it equitably in the community. The villages currently produce 150–200 tons of fruit a year, but the potential is much more.

BAIF helped the villagers form self-help groups to manage the fruit. Between 50 and 70 women and 10–12 men participate each year during the one-month-long harvesting season. The women do most of the collecting, grading and packaging. They have many domestic responsibilities that keep them at home, many are illiterate, and they have limited experience in business communication. That means that they have to rely on the men to take care of tasks such as transport, sales, record-keeping and coordination.

There were some positive changes. During regular meetings with the men, women for the first time came to know about sales and incomes. The self-help groups have their own bank accounts where they deposit profits from their sales – a total of Rs 75,000 (\$1,600). This is the first time that the women have received their own income.

However, because the project did not address the division of labour into men's and women's work, it had limited impact. The women still depended on the men for marketing. They did not gain sufficient communication skills or market experience. So, even though women were at first enthusiastic to take on roles such as teaching or selling, their enthusiasm waned as progress faltered.

Organizing can help both women and men earn more and benefit from the value chain. But to secure full benefits for women, gender divisions of labour have to be directly addressed.

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- **Box 6.5, Custard apples bear fruit**, describes a mixed male/female group that sells custard apples. After initial successes, it has floundered because the division of labour between women and men has not been addressed.
- **Box 6.6, A proud moment for women in Pratapgarh**, complements the aonla case; it captures the pride felt by group members when they were recognized by the president of India.

The custard-apple story in Box 6.5 underlines the importance of addressing traditional gender divisions of labour rather than reinforcing them. In the two cases that follow, a woman-only approach is embraced. In the sabai grass case (Case 6.3), men were responsible for marketing the produce and thus controlled the income. This was the springboard for UNIDO to support the re-establishment of a self-help group, to ensure that this time it benefitted women.

## Case 6.3 Money doesn't grow on trees: It grows on the ground!

*Amit Kumar Singh*

The scene is a grass field in Mayurbhanj, a district in Orissa, in eastern India.<sup>1</sup> Nothing more than grass swaying in the wind, it seems. Perhaps, a visitor may wonder, what exotic reptilian with potentially malicious intentions is hiding there?

But the women who pass by to fetch water see something else: money!

The grass is called *sabai* (*Eulaliopsis binata*). Eco-friendly and waterproof, it is a versatile raw material, used for making rope, twine and everyday products such as mats and carpets, as well as pulp for paper.

For the poor tribal women of Orissa, making *sabai* rope has been a daily routine for centuries. They harvest the grass, twist it by hand into ropes, remove any stray strands, and tie the ropes into bundles. *Sabai* brings in 80% of the family's cash income. No wonder they call it "the money plant".

But the women do not benefit from their labour. They do 90% of the work – 26 hours a week – but selling the rope and other *sabai* products is a job for the men. They work only 4 hours a week, but get to keep all the money. This was the main reason that women's self-help groups for the women failed. Established in 2004 by the federal government's Women and Child Development Department, these groups dissolved as they had no business plans, no income to sustain their activities, and no way to repay money they had borrowed.

A diagnostic study by UNIDO found that the self-help groups were not functioning. The local men did not see great value in their wives getting into the *sabai* trade. Money is scarce in these villages, and poverty is abundant. Families have little or no income; some have problems meeting their basic food needs during the rainy months.

### Intervention

UNIDO thought it was worth reviving the self-help groups. In 2006, it began to organize the women in small groups of 10 persons each, and 140 such groups in all. It taught the members how to run small businesses, keep simple accounts, manage an organization, organize meetings, etc. It also introduced new ways to weave rope, and took the group leaders to local markets and arranged them to meet with traders.

UNIDO needed a strong partner that could provide additional support, especially after the end of the project in 2008. So it worked with the Women and Child De-

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velopment Department, and trained the department's field workers. The partners convinced the banks, which had negative experiences with the self-help groups, that the groups would now be good clients. The partners helped the women develop business plans and guaranteed to the banks that any loans would be repaid.

But it was harder to convince the village men that these activities with the women were a good idea. The Federation of Village Forest Protection Committees, which enjoys tremendous respect among the men, held public meetings to tell them about the project's benefits. That opened the way for the self-help groups to sell the rope they had made at the local markets, bypassing a number of commission agents, and making the women their families' breadwinners. With their extra income, the self-help groups could offer bigger loans. The women also started making products and selling them directly. The groups turned into centres for sharing this knowledge and technology with their members and other groups who were not directly involved in the project. In addition, local small-scale manufacturers started making weaving machines using an improved design.

### Money for new rope

What has changed? There have been very direct and noticeable benefits for the women and for 5,000 village households. Before, they earned no money; now they regularly earn Rs 1,000 (\$22) a month – money that they control personally. That means that if a woman wants to visit a friend in another village, she does not have to ask her husband for money.

The technology has made the work easier and three times more productive. In less than two years, the self-help groups have boosted their savings from a total of \$11,000 to nearly \$46,000. Their borrowings have gone up from \$34,000 to \$110,000, and repayments have increased from \$7,500 to \$40,000. Some groups have started leasing land to grow *sabai* – something that used to be very rare.

Earning their own money has had important social effects. A woman who earns now enjoys more respect in the community, especially from her husband and his parents and relatives.

The self-help groups provided training, along with a platform for women to visit local markets to sell their rope and to develop their negotiation skills. For most women these were first-time experiences; the women greatly increased in confidence and ability to stand up and express their interests. This is clearly visible in their greater participation and active voice in village meetings. Their education and group network has also given them access to bank loans, support programmes, government help and other benefits.

So there are clear improvements and some significant advances. But the progress is fragile, and the women need continued support if they are to challenge the structural inequalities and social norms in their homes and the community.

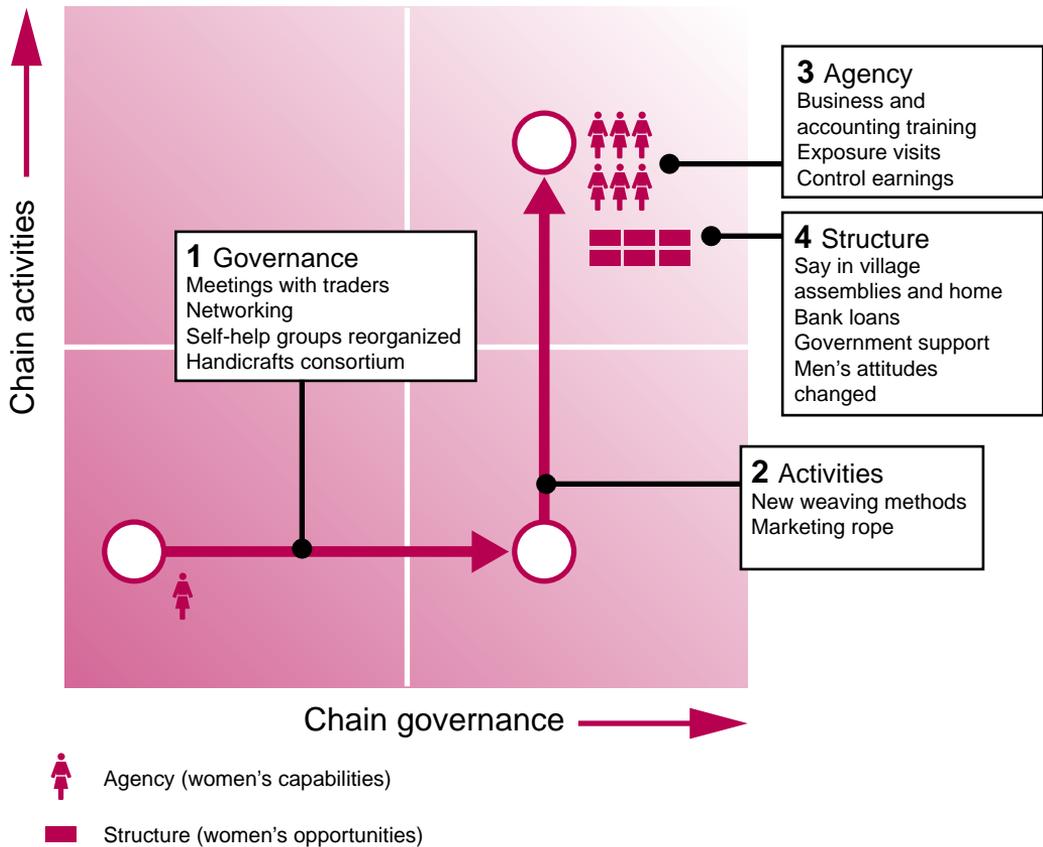


Figure 6.4. Changes in the sabai grass chain in India

### Analysing the change

The first change was in revitalizing the women's self-help groups: they were reorganized, restructured and formed a consortium to market handicrafts. Network building and changing the terms of trade through collective action was an important step (**chain governance**). The next change was where the women started to add value to their *sabai* products and take them to market (**chain activities**). The third step was to increase the women's **agency** through training and exposure visits, which built self-confidence and their ability to make informed decisions. Finally, the women gained market access and a say in decision-making both in chain-related activities as well as in village assemblies and within the household (**structure**).

The changes in each of the four dimensions were of similar importance, with improvements on one dimension reinforcing changes in the others. For example, the strategy to revitalize collective action was made easier due to a conducive policy environment. The government supported the self-help groups and financed them without any collateral. Furthermore, women's participation was made mandatory in village assemblies (a structural change). When women controlled

the income and could make decisions (agency), they were motivated to improve production and engage in marketing (chain activity). Capacity development and a strong business plan were key elements in the groups' success. They were also crucial to convince the local men (structural change): the women's greater earnings helped do this. But these changes are still fragile, and government support is still necessary for long-term success.

## Case 6.4 Aonla: Changing the lives of rural women in India

*Shipra Deo*

With an average of seven members, families in Pratapgarh district are big.<sup>1</sup> But farms are small: roughly two-thirds of the district's people have less than an acre, or own no land at all. The soils in this part of Uttar Pradesh are alkaline, and yields are low, so many men leave to look for work in the cities. The women are left to take care of the children, the house and the animals.

Age-old practices severely limit their mobility, access to resources and ability to make decisions. For example, a woman is not allowed to go out of the house alone. It would be impossible for an individual woman to harvest and sell a crop on the local market: even if she had the adequate technical skills and knowledge, there are huge cultural barriers to overcome. They pose the biggest challenge.

### Feminine power

In 1996, with European Union support, BAIF, a big Indian NGO, helped women in Pratapgarh organize into self-help groups. There were 72 groups with a total of around 1,000 members. These groups focused on pooling money and lending it to members. They was also a good place to discuss issues and make decisions together. The groups were federated as *shakti* (meaning "feminine power"), where they could come together and address issues of joint concern.

Through these groups, the women were encouraged to start planting *aonla* (Indian gooseberry, *Phyllanthus emblica*), a highly desired ingredient in medicine and nutrition products. The *aonla* tree is versatile and hardy, tolerates drought, and needs little care: a perfect cash crop for this area. A tree yields 150–200 kilograms of berries a year. BAIF taught the women how to plant trees, graft cuttings, and care for the crop.

In addition to the self-help groups, a village development committee was established in each village, with both men and women members. These gave local people a way to discuss issues of common concern. These committees were associated with a registered organization, Raniganj Kshetriya Vikas Samiti (RKVS), which continued various support initiatives on livestock, health, childcare and literacy even after the BAIF programme ended in 2004.

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## The Sunhara India Project

But as so often happens in development work, the end of the programme meant progress stalled. After several years of stagnation, in 2009 a new project was launched to increase returns from *aonla* farming and to ensure it provided a regular income. This project, the Sunhara India Project, was supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and implemented by Agribusiness Systems International and BAIF. It worked with the existing self-help groups, but also established specific farmer groups for women.

Each of these farmer groups has 25–30 members. A lead farmer from each group is trained in a range of skills, including soil sampling and testing, field preparation, seed selection, intercultural operations, integrated pest management, harvesting, post-harvest handling and produce marketing. She then subsequently trains the other women in her group.

The project uses various ways to help the women learn. Demonstration plots showcase new technologies. The women visit universities, farmers' fairs and other places where they can see other women who have broken the social and cultural barriers. The project establishes links with input suppliers, government institutions and big private companies which buy produce. Meetings discuss difficult topics openly, and the women can learn of new opportunities, express their ideas, hopes and frustrations, and share successes.

The marketing of the *aonla* has been transformed. Before, the women sold their produce through a series of traders, who kept most of the profits. Now the lead farmers collect the produce and bring it to RKVS, which sells it directly to a wholesaler. The result? The women's incomes have doubled from Rs 2.50 to Rs 5 per kilogram.

The women also started a processing unit where they take turns to make products such as pickles, jam, powder, candy and sweets, which they market under their own brand, "Vrindavan", and sell in local retail outlets and at exhibitions and fairs.

### A first step to changing society

In traditional Indian society, social influence and respect are closely linked to caste, age, economic and political status. Membership in a group improves a woman's position in her family and the family's status in the village. The first step – when a woman joins a group because she is a farmer – itself challenges the notion that the main actors in value chains are men.

Today the network has grown to 2,500 members. The leaders of successful self-help groups are regarded as important and influential people. Joint actions, such as cleaning the village or helping someone in need, are expressions of power that go against existing stereotypes of women.

Women have learned how to cultivate *aonla* better, and they have expanded into processing and marketing. Production has increased (in 2010, they sold 200 tons) and their income has doubled.

The women's confidence has increased, and they have become more mobile. As they step out of their homes and villages, they are learning how to handle social situations better. For example, they are learning to tackle "teasing" and harassment by men at home and in public, leading to a decline in instances of violence. Some have even got jobs in government programmes.

### Analysing the change

Quite substantial changes occurred in all four dimensions. The first came in relation to **agency**. Women can now make informed decisions and are working for social change. Through participation in the groups, the women became better positioned in their families and the community, and their self-confidence went up.

The second step was in **structure**. Before, the women were limited by traditional cultural norms and were confined to their houses. Now they have become members of village assemblies, earn their own money, and are recognized by society for their contributions.

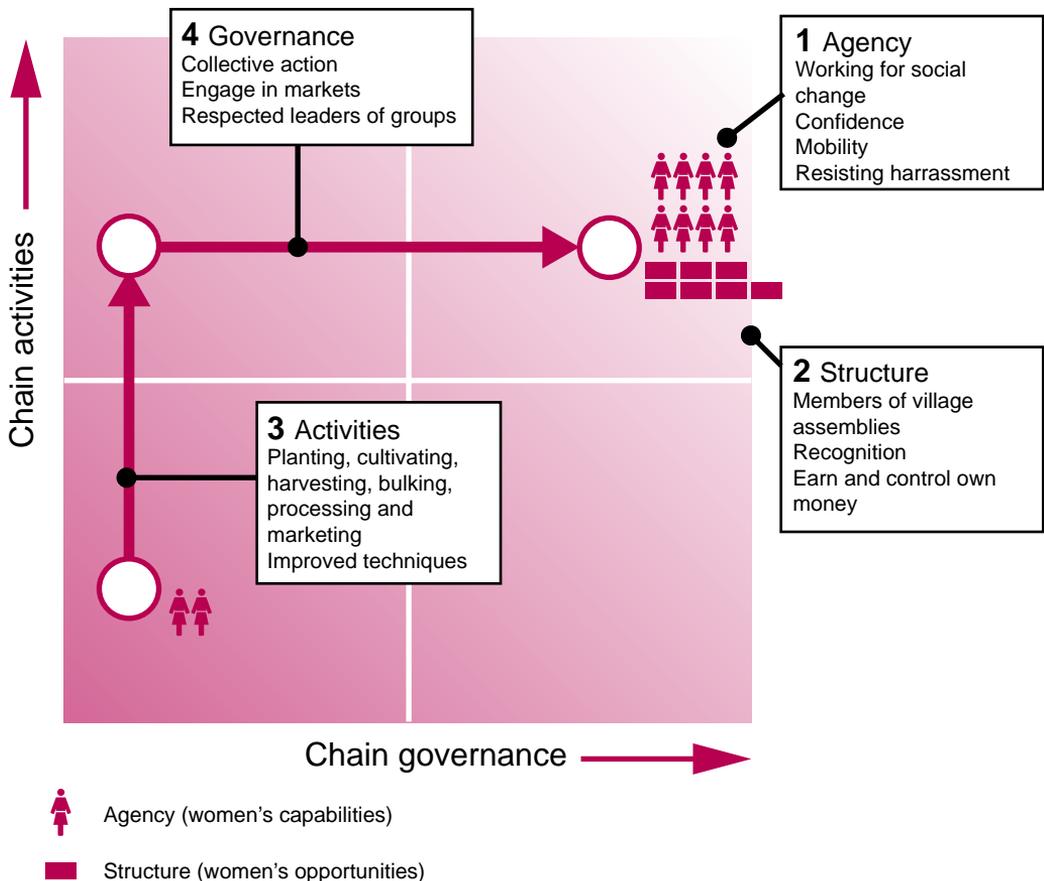


Figure 6.5. Changes in the aonla chain in India

### Box 6.6. A proud moment for women in Pratapgarh

Akhtari and her friends are still thrilled when they recall that day.

“It was praise for the progress women in the area have made”, she says.

She is talking about 2 May 2007, when APJ Abdul Kalam, the president of India, visited their village stall and bought *aonla* pickles and candy. He met several people in the village, talked to them, and said how much he appreciated their efforts to improve their lives. There was a big gathering in the village, and everyone pledged with him: “Children are our invaluable property. We will not discriminate among our daughters and sons. We will set an example for our children.”

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**Chain activities** shifted from a lack of involvement to planting, cultivating, harvesting, aggregating and processing *aonla*. And, finally changes in chain governance came about as women became organized and acted collectively.

In this case we see clearly the phenomenon discussed in the introduction to this book, namely the **feminization of agriculture**. We read about the roots: men are driven to the cities to earn money. And we see the effects: women are left to support their families through subsistence agriculture and trying to grow and sell cash crops.

## Getting together

Self-help groups offer significant potential to change gender relations. But they are no cure-all. We see that in both the custard-apple and *sabai* descriptions, it is necessary to address the existing gender division of labour. Women need support as they enter new roles; that demands investment in capacity building.

That said, this subchapter illustrates positive impacts from collective action:

**Income goes up.** Incomes for women in the self-help groups generally improve. This was true in the *sabai* case, where new weaving equipment boosted production, and joint selling gave women higher incomes and control over the earnings. The promise of higher income is an important incentive for women to join a group, and for men to support their participation. Linking women to the market is important to ensure that they can enjoy the fruits of their labour.

**Women's contributions are recognized.** In groups, women have a collective voice and can have more influence than as individuals. Their contributions to the household income, food security, etc., are more visible within the family and the community. Making women's contributions visible and recognizing them is vital to ensure that those contributions are assessed fairly and rewarded appropriately.

As women's productivity and income increase, power relations within the chain, households and communities shifted. Selling in bulk is an example: doing so increases the women's bargaining power, allows them to sell to new buyers, and gives them better prices. Through their organization, the women gain status and respect in their communities and households. In several of the cases in this chapter, husbands and in-laws became more supportive to women in fulfilling their domestic responsibilities.

**Changes in behaviour** of both women and men were also observed. Women became more assertive and confident, and men became more accepting of the new roles the women were taking up. The women's growing confidence led to changes in other aspects of life: a decline in violence against women, greater participation of women in village assemblies, increased mobility and more access to information and markets. Before, the *sabai* rope-makers did not know the prices of different types of rope, so they did not think to improve the quality to get a higher price.

Through working as a group and being successful enables women to engage with confidence in chain activities and accept leadership roles. They work with banks, wholesalers and input suppliers, and promote their own products. More income gives women greater independence and freedom to spend money in ways they choose – such as investing in equipment and inputs to increase their future output.

## Conclusions

Traditionally women in India have not been integrated into markets, as we see in the *aonla* and *sabai* examples. Even where they are integrated, they tend to have little power; for example, they often sell low-value product in local markets rather than higher-value items further along the value chain. Limited access to resources

and a lack of skills are major impediments in penetrating markets – even where women encounter no active resistance from men, community members or their families. By coming together collectively women can begin to overcome these obstacles.

This strategy – collective action – works when individuals **share a common challenge**. Where women in a community have a common issue that could unite them – like frustration over not being able to negotiate with buyers – then there is potential for effective collective action.

Whether an intervention works with existing groups or forms new ones, the groups need **continuous nurturing and support**. After a group is formed, it is important that it progresses continuously. The members' determination to advance is vital for this.

Where support in the form of finance or infrastructure is provided, **complementary training** is probably also important. Case 6.1 (rice in Mali) gives an example of this: building dams increased the area where rice could be grown, but people needed to learn how to take advantage of the new opportunity. In general, capacity building should be an integral part of the core business of a group. Exposing members to best practices in the region can stimulate them to improve their own work.

Equally important is the **role of facilitators**. If group members live close to each other, it is easier for a facilitator to concentrate on the group and ensure regular meetings and high attendance.

**Governmental support and policies** that favour the goals of women's groups may be an important factor. In the *sabai* case we saw the importance of policy: the government promotes the formation of self-help groups as a means for ensuring financial inclusion. Collective action and capacity building of women have a strong impact, but the state has a key role to play to make these gains durable.

Investing in the capabilities of women farmers not merely improves income, but also **breaks gender barriers** in the culture, and brings about social transformation. The *aonla* case is a good example of this.

The final consideration is to **involve men and the community** in the group's network and to find points of collaboration that benefit all parties equally. This will help to sustain working relationships. We discuss this further in Chapter 6.3.

### Situating the arguments

We see that collective action is driven by all three sets of arguments as presented in Chapter 2: social justice, poverty reduction and the business argument. From a **social justice** point of view, working together can help to overcome gender inequalities, and can improve the visibility of women's work, enabling them to be better served (as in the case of *aonla*).



Another reason for collective action is that it can be a way of **reducing poverty** and improving the welfare of poor people. The **business argument** is also relevant: dealing with groups instead of individuals is more efficient. We have seen from the cases that access to higher incomes can be an important incentive for women to join a group, and for men to support women's participation in such groups.



## 6.3 Sensitizing men

It may seem obvious, but it is often forgotten: men have a big role in achieving gender equity. Men who live and work together with women in a household, the community or workplace need to be sensitized to the challenges women face and the contributions they can and do make.

Women and men are entwined in social relationships. But when it comes to access and control over resources, these relationships tend to favour men. If an intervention aims at changing this (e.g., by “favouring” the women) it is often erroneously perceived to disadvantage men. Some men and communities may resist such interventions. Therefore, any intervention to improve the position of women in a household, community or chain should address men’s concerns as well.

The starting point of this subchapter is that sensitizing men and communities about gender issues helps to create a supportive environment for women to take up new activities, responsibilities and leadership roles.

### Box 6.7. Sensitizing men

**Entry point.** Sensitizing men targets societal structures by challenging norms and behaviours at household, community and national levels. Sensitizing men (and other community household and community members) is crucial to provide women a supportive environment, and to enable them to take up other roles, responsibilities and leadership positions.

**Why do it?** Interventions that aim to change social relationships and to improve the position of women must also address men’s concerns in order to avoid resistance and get the required support from men and the community.

**How to do it?** In most cases sensitization is key to creating an environment that supports change and to mitigate negative effects of interventions aiming at women’s empowerment (such as conflicts within households). Ways to involve men and increase their awareness include:

- Use a participatory approach, including both men and women, to develop joint visions
- Show the link between women’s successes and positive spin-off on households, communities and chain performance
- Identify key entry points to allow organizations to address resistance at individual, household, community and institutional levels
- Sensitize men in leadership positions (e.g., within producer organizations).

**When is it a good strategy?** The strategy is especially applicable where resistance from men and communities is likely to be high, for example:

- In case of affirmative action, favouring women over men
- The introduction of women-only chains, which exclude men’s active participation
- Interventions in chains where women depend on men to access markets
- Involvement of organizations where there is a clear gender imbalance, and consequently women’s needs are not well represented.

### Box 6.8. A traditional institution persuades men

The men in Mayurbhanj did not like the idea of their wives spending time in meetings and doing work outside the home (Case 6.3): especially going to the market alone to sell the ropes they had made from sabai grass. So it was clear that to get the self-help groups up and running, it was crucial to get the men's support. How to do this?

The strategy was to use the voice of a respected institution in the community, the Budhikhamari Joint Forest Protection Committee. The people in this tribal area have a lot of faith in this institution, which is the apex federation of 95 village forest-protection committees. It is known for its pioneering work to protect forests in Mayurbhanj and for helping the villagers get rights to the forest. Besides protecting the forest, the federation also provides land on lease for growing sabai grass, and settles disputes over the ownership and leasing of forest land.

Initially, the sabai project staff were threatened with dire consequences if they were to ruin the tribal people's culture and forest. But the federation leaders, who are all well known in the villages, guaranteed that the project did not have bad intentions. They promised help in eliminating the debts of the self-help groups and in improving life in the village. The men agreed to listen. Several rounds of village meetings were held, where the leaders announced their support to the programme and asked the men to cooperate.

The strategy was very successful – as described in Case 6.3. The self-help groups were re-activated, the women made and sold new products, household incomes went up, and women now take part in the village assembly. There was an unexpected effect on the federation itself, which made some structural changes and now includes women and youth in its network.

This story shows how using a locally respected traditional institution can be very effective in reducing resistance and generating support.

Several cases in this book illustrate the importance of sensitizing men. The cases are fully presented elsewhere in the book; in this subchapter experiences with sensitizing men are presented in boxes.

In the custard-apple story in India (Box 6.5), the lack of such sensitization meant women benefited little. They ended up with too much work for too little reward. They withdrew from the project.

In this subchapter, the Costa Rican organization CEDECO (Box 6.12) found that its all-male leadership could not effectively work with female members. The board decided to revise its employment policies and mandated that all employees participate in gender sensitization exercises.

We see a different situation in Box 6.9 about Café Femenino, where awareness training helped men understand why it was important for women to supply a women-only coffee brand. When they saw how their families would benefit financially, and when their other concerns were dispelled, the men gradually came to support the women's participation in the brand.

This subchapter describes both how to sensitize men and the results of such efforts.

- **Box 6.8, A traditional institution persuades men**, describes how leaders of a respected local institution made it possible for women to develop the sabai grass rope industry.

### Box 6.9. Involving men in a “women-only” brand

OPTCO is a coffee-buying company that sells Café Femenino as one of its brands. It uses a women-only strategy to distinguish Café Femenino from other coffee brands.

But OPTCO does not view Café Femenino as a way to separate the contributions of women and men. Rather, it aims to strengthen the women and thus create stronger partnerships. Men are an integral part of this process.

The first step was to provide a monetary incentive. It pays a premium to women to sell coffee they have produced. This money is a key motivation for women to keep their coffee separate from the men's. The men can see how this income benefits the whole family.

The other step was to secure the support of the cooperative's board of directors. Their support of the programme set a strong example that the other men of the cooperative followed.

Understanding and addressing the fears of men were important in introducing this scheme. The men were worried that if the women had their own income, they would leave them. They also feared that the women could not manage money.

“We realized that in order to secure the support of the men for the Café Femenino programme these concerns had to be addressed”, says Gay Smith, OPTCO's general manager. “So, along with the training on financial operations for the women, we also organized gender training for both men and women.”

By providing women with opportunities to realize their potential, the programme focused on creating stronger partnerships between husbands and wives.

“Throughout the years, we noticed visible changes”, says Smith. “During the first year, the women came to the meetings with their children. However, in the second year there were no children in the meetings: because the women were attending a business meeting, their husbands looked after the children at home.”

Today the men help out both with children and household chores. Some say that they are impressed with the women's ability to manage money. In fact, some even admitted that their wives were better at managing the money than they were.

- **Box 6.9, Involving men in a “women-only” brand**, illustrates how gender training benefited both women and men.
- **Box 6.10, Drink less beer, grow more coffee**, tells how the Gender Action Learning System was used in Uganda to sensitize men.
- **Box 6.11, Paineto's transformation**, describes how one man learned to be gender-sensitive, and how he has passed the message on to others.
- **Box 6.12, Gender sensitivity from the board down: CEDECO in Costa Rica**, describes how one organization is making itself gender-sensitive from the top down.

Addressing gender equity in value chains can generate resistance from individual men, from the community as a whole, or from organizations. How to overcome such resistance? Box 6.8 describes how a gender initiative found a vital ally in the form of a traditional institution.

### Box 6.10. Drink less beer, grow more coffee

The Bukonzo Joint Cooperative (Case 6.2) used various ways to raise men's awareness and reduce resistance to efforts to promote women coffee farmers. First, some of its men members attended a Gender Action Learning System training administered by Oxfam Novib (Chapter 10.1). After the training, these men acted as peer trainers, sharing what they had learned with other men in informal discussions. They emphasized the need for men to change their ideas about women and their role in their families. They visited various locations, from bars to individual homes, and talked to cooperative members and non-members.

The cooperative also lobbied the local government restrict the opening hours for bars: they said the bars should be closed in the morning, so reducing alcohol consumption, cutting the men's spending, and making it more likely that men and women work together in the fields. After this lobbying effort, 58 men and local traders reported that they had reduced their drinking.

The training gave both women and men insights into their roles in production and marketing. The women were now able to negotiate better with their menfolk about who should do what. Many men realized for the first time that if they did not work closely with their wives on coffee, the family's income would suffer. Husbands and wives started planning their futures together. Some men of the men came to see that the women should manage land. Some 8% of the cooperative members have signed joint land leases with their spouses.

Some men took even more active steps, establishing the Musasa Kabyogho men's group. This group meets every month to discuss the challenges they face in the household and in working with their families. Group members support each other, and they have even disciplined members who have abused their partners physically or denied them income from the coffee.



**Box 6.11. Paineto Baluku: One man's transformation**

“Growing up I believed – much like the other boys in my village – that housework was for women, and men had to go to the city to find a job. After finishing school, I went to town to work as a day labourer in the construction industry. After two years, through one of my colleagues, I heard of the Uganda Change Agent Association and their change agent programme. After completing the training in 1992, I realized that the reimbursement of my job at the time was not enough to provide subsistence for me and my family. I became aware of the importance of going back home to support my family and community. Other issues also touched me during the training, especially how women are treated at home. Once the workshop was finished, I did not go back to work but went back to my rural home.

“After returning home, I started doing things differently, like helping my wife in the kitchen, working in the garden, bringing food and firewood. I also cared for my baby at home. My neighbours were surprised, constantly asking me why I did women's activities. Some went much further. After realizing that I was helping my wife, some men relatives and family members even tried to stop me from doing my 'wife's work'. When I married, we paid 12 goats for my wife, so in their mind she was paid for this work. I tried to educate them about the benefits of sharing the household workload. However, they refused to listen, believing that I had been 'enchanted' by my wife. I was relentless, working to mobilize the men in my village to join the change agent programme. By 1994, we could form a branch office of the national Uganda Change Agent Association with 16 men who had finished their training. Eleven went on to be active members of the group.

“In 2007, Bukonzo Joint Cooperative, together with other NGOs and community-based organizations in the region, organized a Gender Action Learning System. It aimed to challenge and alter gender inequalities in households and villages, and it encouraged both men and women to attend. The workshop helped many participants realize that supporting the women in their household activities brings many benefits. It reduces their workload in the house and enables them to contribute more to the family budget through farming.

“I repeatedly stressed the importance of eliminating the custom of charging 12 goats dowry for my sisters' marriages. This dowry is a key justification for overburdening wives with laborious tasks. This was a success. My four sisters were not married with dowry, and now work hand in hand with their husbands.”

*More information: Case 6.2; Paineto Baluku, Bukonzo Joint Cooperative Microfinance Society*

Another approach is to target the men concerned directly. This was what OPTCO, the company behind the Café Femenino brand, did (Box 6.9). It showcased how women can lead successful projects and be good managers, and showed how men also benefit from a woman-only brand (e.g., through higher family incomes).

Box 6.10 describes how Bukonzo Joint Cooperative used the Gender Action Learning System to bring about change.

Men naturally want better lives for their offspring – boys and girls. Café Femenino approached men as “fathers of daughters” to sensitize them to the need for gender equity.

Can sensitization and awareness raising really change behaviour? The story of Paineto (Box 6.11) says, at least in some cases, yes.

### Box 6.12. Gender sensitivity from the board down: CEDECO in Costa Rica

The Corporación Educativa para el Desarrollo Costarricense (CEDECO) promotes organic marketing among producers in rural Costa Rica. CEDECO's board of directors wants to make the organization more gender sensitive and better at reaching out to the poorest. It is a very diverse board, chaired by a woman, with representatives of different stakeholders and backgrounds: government, universities, NGOs, etc.

When it analysed its success in opening organic markets to poor producers, it realized the importance of households in boosting efficiency and entrepreneurship. Even when women were closely involved in the value chain, tradition meant that men still dominated decision making.

In Costa Rica agronomists and other farming related professionals are usually men. As the board lacked the knowledge and tools it needed to implement a more gender-balanced approach to their work, it needed the help of gender experts. It also helped its client organizations adjust their employment policies to make it easier to hire women extensionists. Up to that point these positions were staffed only by men. Women extensionists will make it easier to train women producers and increase their capacity and confidence.

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Paineto's story shows the power of awareness raising or sensitization to influence individual change. But the circumstances do not always support this process.

Box 6.12 shows how the board of an organization in Costa Rica has stimulated gender sensitivity throughout the organization, including the board itself.

## Men can learn too

This subchapter draws mainly on cases discussed elsewhere in the book. They illustrate the importance of sensitizing men in combination with interventions that target women. We see several positive impacts. Sensitizing men to changing gender dynamics in various ways:

- **It mitigates conflict.** Sensitization of men can help to reduce male–female tensions within households or the community.
- **It creates better conditions for women in the chain.** Some women in both the Café Femenino and the Bukonzo cooperative now manage their own land and marketing. That means they earn more from growing coffee.
- **It supports the sharing of household tasks and responsibilities.** Men's and women's tasks generally shift when men are sensitized. Some men now share domestic responsibilities, and women play a bigger role in chain activities and governance.
- **It paves the way for women in leadership positions.** Men are joining women-run cooperatives and are coming to accept women as leaders. This is happening in broader society too, with men now accepting women's participation in village assemblies.

The boxes depict a number of sensitizing approaches. In the Café Femenino example, sensitization aimed at men who work or live closely with the women coffee producers (e.g., their husbands or fathers). In the *sabai* group in India, the whole community was targeted. The Uganda example illustrates the value of targeting male leaders in producer organizations and communities.

In other situations, sensitization may be more the result of an intervention rather than the strategy in itself.

## Conclusions

Often a combination of strategies and activities are used for maximum impact. For example, CEDECO combined affirmative action with sensitization by encouraging the employment of women extension workers at the same time as training staff on gender awareness. A participatory approach is helpful, such as getting participants to analyse and reflect on their own actions and behaviour. In the Uganda example, husbands and wives created joint household visions to plan and track changes in the future.

All the examples in this subchapter involved some form of training or workshops for people to look at how to integrate gender into the value chain, and to

identify men's concerns. In Café Femenino, the workshop revealed two fears: the men were afraid that if their wives or female employees were empowered, they would leave them; and they said that women lacked financial skills. Café Femenino responded by training women in financial management and offering gender training for both men and women.

In the Uganda example, training men as peer trainers was successful in sensitizing men about gender issues and challenging gender inequality. Such peer trainers can have a big influence on the way other men behave. The challenge is to identify peer trainers who are committed to gender equity issues.

The examples show that sensitizing men is needed in projects that seek to challenge gender inequalities and improve the condition and position of women. Different sensitization methods work in different places. Where women and men do not mix, sensitization methods that focus on peer training (men sensitizing other men) may work best, as in the India example. In traditional societies, it is a good idea to approach leaders and organizations that have moral authority, but which themselves are ready to accept an increasing status of women.

In conclusion, we can say that sensitization of men is especially relevant where resistance from men is likely to be high.

### Situating the arguments

The arguments for sensitizing men are often rather straightforward: without sensitization interventions are likely to fail and can even harm women.

If we go back to the three sets of arguments as presented in Chapter 2, we see **business arguments** prevail.

Economic arguments are often used as entry points to sensitize men and communities to changing women's roles. In the case of Café Femenino, the men began to support women when the brand succeeded in the market. Café Femenino paid premium prices, and trained the women involved so they could participate effectively in markets. That attracted the attention and admiration of men, who then began to accept that women could participate on an equal footing.



Economics was also important in the *sabai* rope example. As the women learned how to negotiate with traders, more and more men began allowing their wives to sell at the market. That was previously done by men only: they feared the women would agree to lower prices.

In the Bukonzio cooperative in Uganda, men became receptive to change when they saw that incomes for both men and women would go up if they could improve the quality of the coffee they sold.

**Social justice** can also be an important entry point. In Uganda, for example, the Gender Action Learning System tool was used to address gender inequality and stimulate behavioural change.

## 6.4 Financing value chains for women

Farmers need money to run their farms. They rarely have enough capital of their own, so they need loans to pay for inputs and labour. They like prompt payment, in cash, after harvest (or even beforehand) (KIT and IIRR 2008). They may need credit to pay for investments in livestock, equipment and processing and storage facilities.

So a lack of financial services ties their hands. They may not be able to produce the amounts or quality that buyers need. They may be unable to diversify their output, stay competitive, or increase their share in the final value of their products (UNCTAD 2004 in KIT and IIRR 2010).

Both men and women farmers have problems getting finance. Banks are traditionally reluctant to finance farmers and other rural entrepreneurs: they think the agricultural sector is too risky, and regard the majority of farmers as unbankable (see also KIT and IIRR 2010). So farmers are more likely to borrow from their business partners, farmer groups or microfinance institutions. Amounts are usually small, and may be in kind or in the form of cash.

Financial support can benefit women, especially if it is combined with capacity building and other services, as women generally face more constraints than men in value chains (Hilhorst and Oppenoorth 1992, KIT and IIRR 2010). Savings are also important: many poor women can set a little money aside as savings, or can save in kind. They use savings to cover various types of expenditures, including emergencies, as well as down payments for loans. Many forms of traditional saving groups exist: they include rotating savings and credit associations and self-help groups. Such groups can provide women with small, often short-term, loans.

### Box 6.13. Badelal: Learning to appreciate women's self-help groups in India



Badelal thought Shobha Devi was wasting her time. At his factory job in faraway Mumbai, he heard that his wife had joined a women's self-help group in their home village. "You are a big minister: you go to the meetings", he told her.

Four years passed, and Badelal returned home. It was the time for their son's wedding, and they needed Rs 10,000 to pay for the ceremony. His elder brother could not afford to give him the money. He tried getting a loan from the bank, but was refused. The moneylender was happy to lend him the sum, but demanded his land as collateral – a deal he turned down.

Shobha's group came to the couple's rescue. The group had saved more than Rs 30,000, and was able to lend Shobha Rs 10,000 without any collateral.

Badelal realized his mistake. He is now proud of his wife's involvement in the group, and has become a big supporter of women's self-help groups.

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### Box 6.14. Financing value chains for women

**Entry point.** Access to finance can benefit women, enabling them to grow their businesses, empowering them and giving them a voice in decision making.

**Why do it?** Women are known to be creditworthy and efficient in undertaking business deals when they have support. Despite this, it is difficult for women to access finance.

**How to do it?** Details vary, but in general, help women organize as a group to apply for a loan from a financial institution. The group lends on small amounts to individual members, collects their payments, and repays the loan. Social pressure in the group ensures that members repay. Give the women the financial and literacy skills they need to plan, apply for and manage the loan.

**When is it a good strategy?** Most applicable is microfinance and savings schemes are usual starting points. As groups and business prosper, they can apply for loans to make larger investments.

Microfinance can increase women's economic power, but it requires political will, an enabling policy environment and strong advocates within the financial institution. Microfinance has to go beyond credit: non-financial services include capacity building and various forms of insurance.

**Conditions for success.**

- Clear family and societal support are needed to ensure that women can benefit from financial services.
- Financial institutions must be sensitive to gender issues and the need to tailor-make financial products for women (such as combining credit with training).
- Continued support requires a local financial infrastructure, close to the women clients and able to maintain a long-term relationship with them.

Box 6.13 illustrates that the household as a whole can benefit from women's savings. Badelal and his wife Shobha Devi were able to get a loan from Shobha Devi's self-help group. It didn't just pay for their son's wedding; it also changed the way Badelal perceived his wife and her participation in a women's group.

Microfinance institutions have shown that the rural poor – and especially women – are in fact bankable. Muhammad Yunus, a microcredit pioneer, says that what makes microfinance a success is its “people-oriented approach”. Women are preferred microfinance clients because unlike men, tend to spend the money on their families rather than themselves (KIT and IIRR 2010).

For both women and men farmers, it is generally easier to access finance as a group. Working with groups is attractive for financial institutions too, as the group is responsible for paying back the loan. This reduces the risk of default. Another way to cut risk is to tailor-make financial products. To do this, the staff of financial institutions may need to learn how to assess the needs of female clients and develop products that meet these needs.

This subchapter looks at a number of experiences illustrating how women have benefited from loans. Note, however, that there are many different types of fi-

nance for rural people, and this subchapter does not aim to cover all the options or the constraints women face.

This chapter presents a single case, as well as a number of stories in boxes:

- **Case 6.5, Microfinance for women entrepreneurs in the Philippines**, is about a bank that provides loans and training to poor women.
- **Box 6.15, Signatures, not thumbprints**, tells how learning how to sign their names enabled Indian women to open a bank account and boosted their self-confidence.
- **Box 6.16, Cattle help Srikantharasa Gnanaveni rebuild her life**, describes how one woman has used a loan from her cooperative to recover after the Sri Lankan civil war.
- **Box 6.17, Financial services for women dairy farmers**, explains how a Sri Lankan cooperative gets bulk loans to lend smaller amounts to its members.
- **Box 6.18, Building financial ties for grass ropes**, describes how a project in India provided a mix of training and credit to help female artisans.
- **Box 6.19, Five steps to mainstream gender in finance institutions**, shows how an NGO mainstreams gender issues into the daily work of microfinance institutions and banks.
- **Box 6.20, Money grows on trees: Tree Aid's revolving fund in northern Ghana**, illustrates an alternative way for women to borrow money through a revolving fund.

### Box 6.15. Signatures, not thumbprints

"You are using thumbprints. I was expecting you to sign!"

The manager of the Pratapgarh Regional Rural Bank, in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, was surprised: Patti Devi and Prema Devi wanted to open an account for their women's group, but they could not even write their names.

The Lakshmi Women's Group in the village of Beejamau, had been saving for 8 months. They wanted to open a bank account and deposit the cash.

The women went away feeling offended. One of their daughters was in class 6 of school, and they asked her to help.

Three days later, Patti and Prema went back to the bank with the other members of their group. They proudly signed their names on the forms.

The manager was impressed. He called his staff together to applaud the two women.

That was a big boost to the group. Soon all the members of the Lakshmi group could sign their names – and members of other groups in the area also started to learn to write.

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## Access to finance

As suggested earlier, women can benefit from financial services if other conditions are met. For example, they need to be able to open a bank account. This sounds easy, but for poor women it can be a big hurdle: the many barriers include fear, distrust and illiteracy (Box 6.15).

## Membership has its benefits

One way for women to get credit is through their membership of a formal organization such as a cooperative. Box 6.16 describes how a Sri Lankan widow used such a loan to rebuild her livestock enterprise.

## Borrowing money to lend money

Cooperatives that provide credit to their members often also need credit themselves, for example to cover their administrative costs, pay farmers cash on delivery, or to invest in warehousing (see also KIT and IIRR 2010). It can be difficult for cooperatives to get loans. Box 6.17 shows how a cooperative in Sri Lanka borrows money and lends it out to its members.

## Money is not enough

Even if women can get loans, they do not automatically benefit. They may need additional assistance to ensure they control their earnings, as well as handhold-

### Box 6.16. Cattle help Srikantharasa Gnanaveni rebuild her life



Being organized is more and more a condition for getting not just finance but other services too. Women can get such services by being members of informal self-help or credit groups, or a formal farmer organization like a cooperative.

Srikantharasa Gnanaveni, a 45-year-old widow in Sri Lanka, got a loan through the cooperative she is a member of:

“My husband died during the war. My mother and my unmarried sister are living with me. We do not have any male support. I have four cows and four calves now. But before the intensive conflict in 1990, we had 90 cows; but those days were gone after our displacements in the past.

“In 2006 I bought one cow on a grant. I have got a loan from the cooperative Rs 50,000 for renovating my cattle shed. Now I have the confidence to repay the loan. And also I want to buy one good breed cow as well.

“I do intensive cattle farming; our relative's land is large enough to let the cows graze; I save at the cooperative as well as somewhere. My main income comes from the livestock. I get Rs 15,000 monthly. I have a plan to build my own house; I am going to do it gradually from the income of milk supply and livestock earning. I handle almost all the works myself.

I can say that cattle-raising has made me confident about leading my life peacefully; there is a change in my life style due to this income generation; I believe this cooperative is also really concerned about women; they try to help us in so many ways.”

*More information: Ravikumar Nadarajah, Oxfam GB, Sri Lanka*

### Box 6.17. Financial services for women dairy farmers

The Livestock Breeders Cooperative Society is a registered cooperative under the Department of Cooperative Development in Sri Lanka. Oxfam has supported the breeders' co-op to prepare a proposal for a bulk loan to the National Development Trust Fund. As a result, the co-op got a loan of Rs 3.5 million (around \$35,000) at 7% interest a year.

In Sri Lanka all financial institutions have bulk-loan schemes. This enables them to lend to producer organizations such as the breeders co-op, which then provide smaller loans to their members. This approach depends on the capacity of the producer organizations to manage funds, but banks like it because the producer organizations press their members to repay. That lowers the bank's risk. Repayment rates tend to be higher than for loans made direct to individuals.

The breeders' co-op now gets bulk loans from both the National Development Trust Fund and Sanasa Bank, and puts them into a common pool. It adds a small charge for administration when lending on to its members. Despite this fee, the loans are still cheaper for the members than if they were to borrow direct from the bank.

The breeders' co-op has also arranged for its members to get livestock insurance and apply for pension schemes with the Department of Livestock Development.

Commercial banks have now introduced group-based financial services, which have lower transaction costs than individual arrangements. They have relaxed their requirements of physical collateral to include social collateral and other substitutes, such as a credible business plan and cash-flow-based lending. Also, they try to make services easily accessible by locating them in places that women frequent. Banks providing such services include the People's Bank, Bank of Ceylon, Hatton National Bank and the Central Bank.

*More information: Ravimukar Nadarajah, Oxfam GB, Sri Lanka*

### Box 6.18. Building financial ties for grass ropes

When UNIDO started its cluster development programme in India, it planned to work with self-help groups on sabai grass (see Case 6.3). But a diagnosis found that most of the groups had defaulted on their loans. They had borrowed money, but it was the men who sold the ropes the women made from the grass. Without control over their income, the women could not repay their debts. The banks naturally turned down requests to re-finance these groups. They agreed only when the programme assured them that it would handhold the groups and ensure regular repayments.

The handholding began with training trainers from the government's Women and Child Development department, which had helped form the groups. The training focused on financial management, business plan and group dynamics. The department trainers, who lived in the same villages as the group members, in turn trained and advised the groups. The members slowly picked up the process and started meeting regularly. After they started to sell the ropes they had made, they began to save, lend out money, and repay their bank loans. Monthly monitoring checked each group's progress.

The average saving per group rose from \$200 to \$330. Total repayments by the 140 groups to the banks increased more than fivefold, from just \$7,500 to nearly \$40,000. The banks lent the groups an additional \$76,000 in less than two years. All the groups were covered by micro-insurance, at a cost of \$0.50 a year for \$500 in coverage.

*More information: Amit Kumar Singh, ACDI/VOCA, India*

ing and training in technical skills, organization, and financial management. If women lack financial skills and healthy group dynamics, loaning money to them can be risky for credit providers. But banks lack the skills and mandate to provide such services, so support from an NGO or development organization is often needed (Box 6.18).

Women are often recognized as trustworthy borrowers: this is a reason that microfinance institutions often target them (Gonzalez and Rosenberg 2006, Fisher and Sriram 2002). But serving women clients requires special skills and may mean providing additional services along with a loan. Case 6.5 illustrates this.



## Case 6.5 Microfinance for women entrepreneurs in the Philippines

*Zonia C. Narito*

In 2003, the noodle factory where Tita Nits and her husband worked closed. Jobless and without an income, they were desperate. What could they do?

The answer came in the form of a loan from the Women's Rural Bank. This is a financial institution in Nits's home province of Batangas in the Philippines. The loan was part of a microfinance programme supported by WISE ACT, an NGO specializing in gender issues.

Along with 10 women neighbours, Nits formed a solidarity group, with Nits elected as the leader. WISE ACT and the bank gave them training in business skills. Each member took a loan of \$120 from the bank. Nits used hers to buy stock for a small shop.

Business was good, and she repaid the loan within six months, then took another loan of \$240 to increase her stock.

As leader of her group, the bank invited her for a seminar on gender. At first she wondered what the relationship could be between gender and business, but went along anyway. The bank recognized her potential as a leader and invited her for a one-year leadership programme offered by WISE ACT. This led Nits to start advocating for women's health and social protection, and she helped out with the Bank's medical assistance work. These activities developed further: in 2009, together with some other bank clients she started a "mobile pharmacy" to provide remote villages with cheap generic and herbal medicines.

### Investing in the food business

Five years on, Tita Nits opened a canteen to serve students and other customers in the centre of Rosario, a big town in Batangas province. She is proud that much of the capital she invested came from the savings she had made from her shop. "It was through my involvement in microfinance that I learned how to save and open a bank account. I always thought banks were only for some educated and the elite people", she says. "I am no longer afraid of visiting the bank."

Even though she had enough capital, Tita did not open her canteen immediately; she studied the market, learned about her competitors, and identified potential customers. She also conducted a taste test of her menu, and knew her customers' food preferences as well as how to price items on the menu.

The canteen has been a success. She employs two mothers and a disabled man. During peak hours, her husband and other family members help out. The staff are enrolled in a social protection scheme. Within a year of opening, Nits has recovered her initial investment. Her husband now manages the shop, which

## Box 6.19. Five steps to mainstream gender in finance institutions

WISE ACT's approach to mainstreaming gender in finance institutions consists of five steps:

- **Preparatory activities.** Setting criteria to select potential partners, gender project orientation, and negotiation and forging partnerships.
- **Profiling of partners and training needs assessment.** Developing tools, gender diagnosis, gender responsive planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and drafting of modules.
- **Institutional gender mainstreaming.** Gender orientation for management and staff towards transformative leadership, and fine tuning of policies and enabling mechanisms to be more responsive to gender needs and concerns.
- **Integrating gender in programmes.** Training of gender facilitators, planning and development of new products and services.
- **Organizing clients and partners** through gender and financial literacy for participation and social enterprise development.

*More information: Zonia C. Narito, WISE ACT, Philippines*

earns PHP 500 (\$12) a day, and the canteen brings in another PHP 2,000 (\$48). Tita Nits is today recognized as a successful businesswoman and a leader in the community.

At home, Tita Nits says “My husband and I share responsibilities even in household work. We have matured as a couple in many ways. Beyond domestic work and business matters, we share our joys and hopes, our sorrows and tears, our dreams and aspirations. We are more alive.”

### WISE ACT and the bank

How did the Women's Rural Bank come to support women like Tita Nits? When it opened in 1998, it was a conventional rural bank serving Batangas - but with an affirmative action programme for women. It was the first women's bank in the Philippines pioneered and founded by women. This was a period when many development organizations were extending small amounts of credit to borrowers without collateral. Loans for women's livelihood activities typically ranged from \$70 to \$1,000, and aimed at alleviating poverty rather than empowering women. In many instances, borrowers used these loans to pay for family needs such as food, education, and healthcare. Private banks did not lend to the poor as they thought doing so was costly and not profitable.

Women's Rural Bank thought otherwise. It started collaborating with WISE ACT on gender issues, and launched a microfinance programme that provides loans along with training for women. It trained the bank employees, both men and women, in gender issues and microfinance, and in how to tailor services to

the needs of female clients (Box 6.19). WISE ACT also promotes the products produced by the bank's clients.

### **Challenges**

WISE ACT does not have the staff or resources to serve an expanding base of 5,000 clients like Tita Nits. So it trains gender advocates and facilitators from among the client groups. These people will eventually provide business development services and other non-financial services to the groups. It has also signed an agreement with a government further education agency to certify its training. The bank and WISE ACT want to establish a women's entrepreneurial centre.

Groups of clients meet each week. That provides a venue for training, sharing information about each other's products and services, and discussions on concerns such as gambling, addiction, parenting, reproductive health and domestic violence. This helps build a sense of community and momentum to finding solutions.

### **Lessons**

Microfinance can increase the power of women in economic activities. But it requires political will, an enabling policy environment and strong advocates within financial institutions. Microfinance has to go beyond credit; important non-financial services include capacity building and the provision of social protection.

### **Analysing the change**

The change started with a policy initiative to reform rural banking, along with sensitizing the bank's staff (structure). This enabled women to get loans in combination with training, which increased their agency. Tita Nits was one of these beneficiaries; she used her loan and new skills to expand her chain activities by setting up new businesses (a shop and later a canteen). As the business owner and as leader of her group she expanded her influence over the chain (governance) and got more training, so became more a more professional manager.

There were relatively small changes in chain activities and in structure, and slightly bigger changes in both agency and chain governance. Reforming the banking system turned out to be a minor step. But combined with training, it opened opportunities for women set up businesses and professionalize them. However, WISE ACT has only limited capacity, and without more institutional support the position of the bank to continue providing loans and training to women is weak.

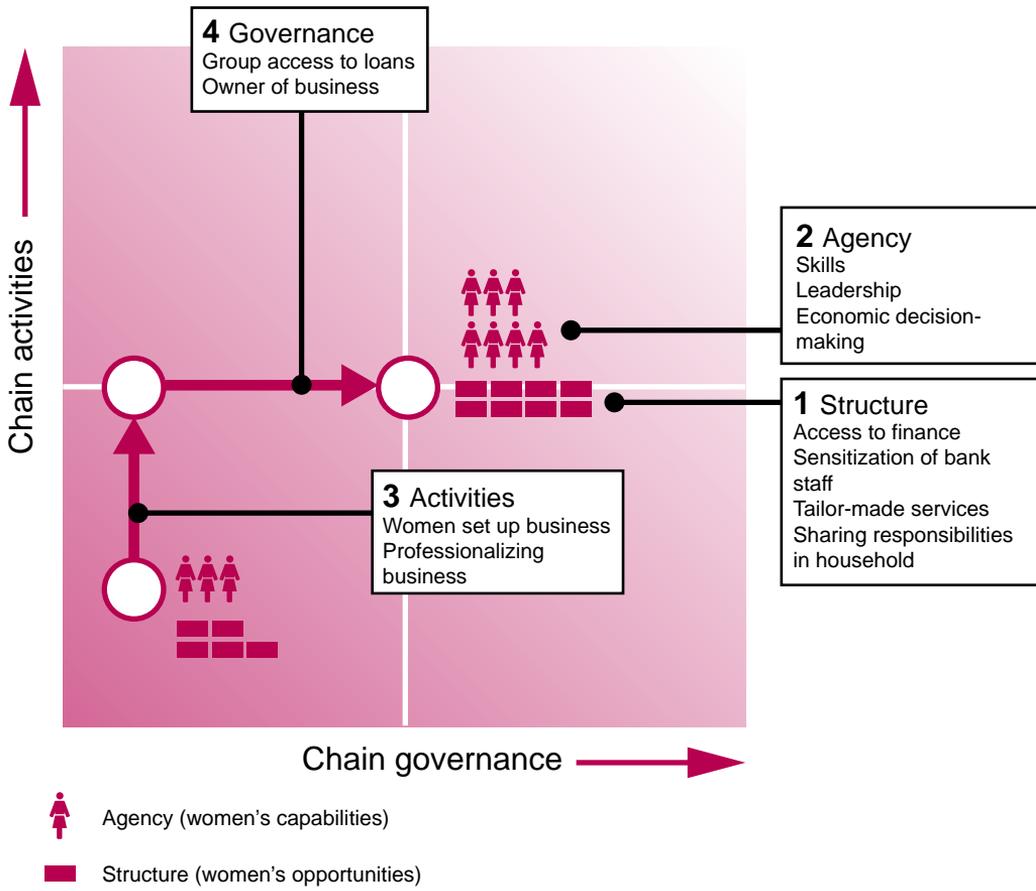


Figure 6.6. Changes in the restaurant chain in the Philippines

## Financing women

Microfinance is both promising and limiting. For the majority of farmers, getting a microfinance loan is very hard. Most borrowers are from urban areas, and loans can come with high interest rates. Case 4.2 describes an alternative form of finance: a revolving fund. Box 6.20 explains how this works.

The evidence in this subchapter draws on a few short boxes and a single case. This limits our analysis, but we can still make a few observations. We can identify different target groups, each with its own particular needs:

- Women groups that want a secure place to deposit their group savings.
- Members of women's groups who want loans to set up individual businesses.
- Individual members of cooperatives who need cash to invest in their farms.
- Cooperatives that need funds to run activities and support their members.
- Financial institutions that need training on gender issues so they can address women's needs and develop women-friendly financial products.

### Box 6.20. Money grows on trees: Tree Aid's revolving fund in northern Ghana

Tree Aid is working with the government of Ghana, FAO and six local NGOs to promote small-scale tree- and forest-product enterprises in northern Ghana (see Case 4.2). After villagers learn about marketing, the project helps them set up group enterprises.

Getting credit at reasonable interest rates is a big problem. Women are particularly affected as they find it hard to prove they are creditworthy. Plus, women have many other time-consuming tasks, making it difficult for them to focus on building a profitable business.

The project's Enterprise Development Revolving Fund offers credit to the poor to invest in money-making activities. To apply for a loan, people do not need any material guarantee or collateral. But they have to fulfil several conditions:

- They must be a member of a legally recognized group that deals in a product and has a good enterprise development plan.
- The group must attend training on group dynamics and business development.
- The group must have an account with a recognized financial institution.
- The members must have financial ledgers and bank books.
- All members obtain loans as individuals, but the money is paid into the group's account. The group decides when the activities are to take place, and the group officials sign the receipt.

So far more than 475 women in 27 groups in 10 communities have been trained in business development skills. They have taken out over \$9,000 in loans at an interest rate of 10%. They have increased their business volume by over 300%, and have gained confidence in dealing with financial institutions.

This intervention shows that if they get the right kinds of support, women are creditworthy and make good businesspeople. Family and societal support are also necessary ingredients for their success.

*More information: Elvis Tangem Paul Nfor, Tree Aid, Ghana*

What do these experiences have in common? In all cases, finance is combined with capacity building (both for women and banks), and finance goes only to individuals who are members of a group.

## Conclusions

Enabling women to benefit from finance requires a supportive environment. The women need to be trained. If a financial institution is involved, its staff need to be sensitized to gender issues. Group dynamics are important in larger groups. Support from the woman's family and the society are also important. Put another way: without capacity building of the women, without organization and gender-sensitive credit providers, it is hard for women to benefit from loans.

In terms of impact, improving access to finance is never a standalone intervention. The story of WISE ACT shows the strength of combining loans with training. Because the bank staff knew how to approach women and deliver tailor-made services, the benefits for women were big. The training and financial services stimulated them to use the money wisely.

## Situating the arguments

The main argument for financing women is the business argument: **serving women serves business and the economy.**



But also the **poverty-reduction** argument that fighting poverty is hard if you're gender blind is relevant. The story of WISE ACT shows that training bank employees on gender issues was important, as well as developing tailor-made services for female clients.



## 6.5 Conclusions

For the most part women have been integrated in value chains in ways that do not enrich their lives: as silent, invisible workers who reap little benefit from their contributions. This section depicts several ways to change this: **capacity building, collective action, sensitization of men** and improving **microfinance**. These approaches lead to greater recognition for women and their work, more female participation in value chains, and benefits to the women involved. Embedded in these strategies are mechanisms to challenge gender inequities.

Interventions can be targeted at different levels. They may operate at an individual level: for example, building the capacity of individual women so they can occupy certain positions and do particular tasks. Such interventions aim to enable women to act independently and to make choices. But for these interventions to work, it may be necessary to address structural issues, such as sensitizing communities and advocating for policy change. Capacity building may have effects that go beyond the value chain: it gives women skills and confidence that they can use to challenge inequalities in other areas of their lives, in the household and in the social and political arenas.

Chapter 6 has drawn on the concepts of **agency** and **structure**. Chapter 6.1 focused on how to build women's agency by equipping them with skills that will increase their productivity and decision making power. The remaining subchapters looked at changing societal structures in such a way that the context supports rather than hinders attempts to foster women's agency. That may mean organizing women's groups (Chapter 6.2), changing norms between men and women (Chapter 6.3), or creating enabling relationships with financial institutions (Chapter 6.4). The result is value chains that become more friendly to women.

The four different strategies that we have explored cannot be treated in isolation. If we picture an individual woman farmer doing more chain activities, then **capacity building** is a necessary first step to foster her participation. The Bukonzo cooperative (Case 6.2) illustrates how sometimes women play a role in value chains at low levels and in ways that do not benefit them: they work as free or cheap farm labour. The women did most of the work, but the men sold the coffee and got the proceeds. They were able to do so because they controlled the land and coffee bushes.

Capacity building will increase women's confidence in taking up new roles in value chains and in the community. The *sabai* rope-makers in India (Case 6.3) became active in village assembly politics. All the cases in Chapters 6.1 and 6.2 show how capacity building and collective action are essential steps in changing value chains to benefit women.

Chapter 6.3 shows why sensitizing men is important in changing value chains to meet economic and gender-justice goals. Sensitizing men targets structural constraints to women's empowerment by challenging norms and behaviours at the household, community and chain levels. Sensitization aims to make local men, support services and the community more woman-friendly. It also aims to

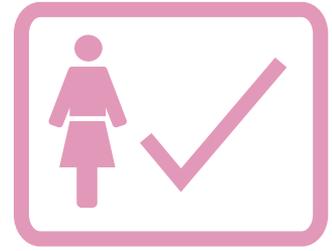
address gender inequities in other spheres of life, such as in credit, and to open male-dominated jobs for women.

Capacity building for women should go hand-in-hand with the sensitization of men. Merely teaching women new farming skills is no use if they are not allowed to use land, get a loan, or sell the harvest. There is no point in teaching them to negotiate prices if community taboos prevent them from going to town. Sensitization of men is also necessary to reduce tensions in the household and community.

This chapter demonstrates why including gender in value chain interventions can lead to gains for both women and men. It also shows how including women in value chains can have positive effects in other areas of the women's lives. It builds their confidence, helps them negotiate a fairer division of labour, gives them access to resources, and enables them to challenge gender inequities within the household.

# 7

## Standards, certification and labels

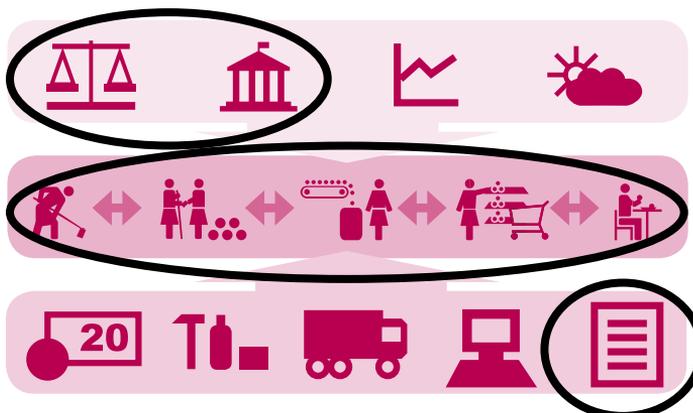


*Main contributors: Rhiannon Pyburn, Peter Chege, Loren Estevez, Richard Kanyarukiga, Gay Smith, Inge Vos, and Catherine van der Wees*

As a strategy to address gender, standards and certification affects the whole chain. This approach is unique in that it connects to the consumer and because it targets the chain context as well: it set standards on who participates in the chain and how (Figure 7.1). This section examines standards and certification as an entry point for gender equity interventions.

Sustainability – social, environmental and economic, and at the farm, family, cooperative and chain level – is the key driver for addressing gender inequity in certified chains. Sustainability standards for agriculture include Fairtrade, organic, UTZ and Rainforest Alliance, amongst others They offer a way to measure efforts, control or punish unsustainable actions, and reward compliance (e.g., through premium prices). They are market-based mechanisms that provide incentives for desirable actions and punish undesirable ones.

Standards and certification generally work in two main ways: as carrots and as sticks.



*Figure 7.1. Using standards, certification and labels focuses on the whole chain, plus the rules and certification bodies*



- The **carrots** are the incentives that standards offer: extra money as a reward for complying with the rules. This is the premium.
- **Sticks** refer to the rules themselves. Once a producer group enters into the certification process, it chooses to follow the rules related to social justice and environmental issues specified by that standard. But if members fail to comply with the rules, then there are sanctions – punishment for not following the rules.

A third important characteristic is the **learning** that becomes an integral part of the system. Organic farming is knowledge-intensive: it demands that farmers

### Box 7.1. A word on coffee

Coffee is a high-profile commodity. It is one of the largest industries in the world, and is grown in over 70 developing countries. Coffee is the second-largest legally traded commodity in the world, second only to another brown liquid – oil. It is very high profile and gets a lot of press and media coverage. Coffee is also, historically, a very male-dominated industry, and for generations deals were sealed with a gentleman's handshake.

In the late 20th century, laws against employment discrimination meant more women began to work in the coffee industry in consuming countries. Some became coffee buyers and traders. As women coffee buyers began to work with coffee exporters and cooperatives, they noticed the lack of women representatives in the producing-country side of the industry. But when they looked more closely, there were lots of women in the fields! And yet no one, including the women themselves, was calling these women workers “coffee farmers”. This realization started a change in the perception of coffee as a man's business: there were women, but their contributions were hidden or unrecognized. So it offers a great opportunity for generating solutions to the problem of global gender inequity. Coffee can be a vehicle for change!



understand the natural systems of which the farm is a part. In order to succeed, farmers need to work in a way that improves natural systems. This learning dimension covers issues related to the standards, technical concerns, organizational development, leadership training, and so forth.

Consumers can tell if a product is certified by looking at the label. Social and environmental labels are an important and effective communication mechanism between producers and processors on one side and consumers on the other. Consumers and producers often live a long way apart, even in different countries, making personal interaction impossible. A label tells the consumer what an examination of the product cannot reveal: it provides information about the process that the product went through before ending up on the supermarket shelf. Some labels are backed by rigorous standards that are verified through third-party auditors to ensure their credibility. Others are less formalized. This chapter looks at both.

Standards, certification, brands and labels cut across many levels: households, production, producer organizations, local firms, service provision, the enabling environment, and international business. For example, the Con Manos de Mujer standard (Case 7.2) has a requirement that women be owners or managers of the coffee farm or certified field. This has repercussions at the household level: land is transferred to the woman's name, and income and benefits are paid to her. Such a requirement also affects the institutional environment: unlike before, women become legal owners of property. Some standards, like Fairtrade, have requirements for how producers are organized and on the democratic functioning and decision-making of their organizations. This is a producer-organization-level issue. The learning required for robust compliance to standards – be it technical, business development or other capacity development – impacts at the service provision, producer and producer organization levels.

## Box 7.2. Understanding the label jungle

**Seals** are recognizable markings on a product that show a particular process has been followed in its production, and that communicate this to the consumer or buyer. The Max Havelaar fair trade mark in the Netherlands is one example. The seals usually go on the product label.

**Eco-labels** were developed by NGOs for both food and consumer products. Their purpose is to communicate to the consumer that the product has followed a particular process – e.g., that it was produced in an environmentally friendly way. Examples include bird-friendly products and the Rainforest Alliance “frog”. The eco-label generally goes on the product label. But to add to the confusion, some seals or eco-labels are for communicating through the chain or from business to business: they not aimed at consumers.

**Standards.** Many standards with eco-labels exist, such as organic, Rainforest Alliance, Marine Stewardship Council, and so on. These standards are aimed at sustainable food production and good social and environmental performance. These are mainstream standards aimed at improving whole sectors of the food industry. The standard itself is a set of rules that producers that use the label must follow.

**Certification** is the process by which a third-party organization (called a certification body) verifies that a farmer, processing unit or plantation has complied with the standard it aims to achieve. An external party verifies if the standard is met using a set of clear indicators. If not, there are sanctions: at worst, the supplier risks being kicked out of the scheme.

**Regulation.** Eco-label meanings are increasingly being legislated in national or regional law (e.g., “organic” in the European Union). This creates legal definitions and certification procedures. In some cases, third-party certification is required as proof of compliance to a regulation. This is the case with organic farmers under the US National Organic Program.

**Standards for standards.** In recent years many schemes have broadened their mandates to cover social, ethical and safety issues as well as the environment. This has led to the growth of a few “super standards” which have become major global brands, including the Fairtrade label, the Forest Stewardship Council for the forestry sector, and the Marine Stewardship Council for fish products. All are becoming well-known to consumer as well as acting as key supplier filters for global buyers. This has led to the emergence of “standards for standards”, whereby the organizations setting voluntary ecolabels adhere to guidelines laid down by wider stakeholder bodies such as ISEAL Alliance ([www.isealalliance.org](http://www.isealalliance.org)).

*Adapted from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecolabel>*

This chapter has two subchapters. **Chapter 7.1** looks at labels that have created a niche in selling a product – coffee – as having been produced by women and generate an added value from this: ostensibly “selling” women’s participation. We present a successful women’s coffee brand, Café Femenino, along with a “women-only” standard, Con Manos de Mujer. We explore the similarities and differences in their approaches. Café Femenino communicates women’s participation directly to consumers via a label. Con Manos de Mujer verifies women’s equity and leadership through certification to its standard: buyers know that the product is produced by women, but are not obliged to use a seal stating that women have produced the coffee when they sell to consumers. We discuss the limits and opportunities of using labels to address gender issues and to communicate with and sensitize consumers. We also explore the social development possible through women-only labels and standards.

**Chapter 7.2** looks at **existing social and environmental standards** as mechanisms for addressing and promoting gender equity. It does this by exploring the indicators of a new “gender” standard as well as more established and mainstream standards like Fairtrade and organic. Key questions are how can more mainstream social and environmental standards better address gender equity, and what is the impact of these programmes on women and gender relations? This subchapter also illustrates some ways that applying social and environmental standards can kick-start the process of making women visible, and helping them recognize their own contributions vis-à-vis their male counterparts.

This chapter may make you feel you have a caffeine overdose (Box 7.1). Much of the evidence indeed comes from certified coffee cases. But this is misleading. While it is a very important crop, and one that has many standards attached to it, coffee is not the only certified crop. That said, women are very active in coffee production, and our examples reflect this.

## 7.1 Labels and seals: Selling women's participation

Organic, Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, Bird Friendly, child-labour free... sustainability labelling is a growing trend in agro-food markets. Such labels sell the values that they represent. Behind the label is a set of criteria or standards. They can be a part of a private company's corporate social responsibility objectives, or an independent standard that relies on third parties to verify its claims. Compliance with these requirements – often referred to as “the code” – needs to be verified. This creates a transparency for consumers or buyers further down the chain. Increasingly, supermarkets and health food stores are seeing women's labels alongside the more recognized environmental and social labels.

This subchapter explores the limits and benefits of woman-only labelling and the conditions under which it may be effective. We present two examples – Café Femenino and Con Manos de Mujer – of how seals and labels address gender inequity.

- **Case 7.1, Café Femenino: Empowering women in rural Peru**, is about a woman-only coffee brand and label. It illustrates the link with the consumer that comes from using a seal on a product label. Through the label, the producer communicates her story to the consumer.
- **Case 7.2, The “Con Manos de Mujer” standard in Guatemala**, describes a new standard for women developed in 2010 by a regional certification body. This standard was developed in 2010 and applies to crops, handicrafts and textiles.

The criteria or standards behind the Café Femenino label are a part of the company's core ethic and are an example of how a company can meet corporate social responsibility objectives. On the contrary, Con Manos de Mujer is an independent standard that relies on third parties to verify producer claims. The seal showing buyers that the produce is Con Manos de Mujer certified does not necessarily appear on a consumer label – that is up to the buyer.

This chapter also contains three boxes:

- **Box 7.4, Organic honey in Ethiopia**, describes a failed organic honey export enterprise that took a new turn in selling to domestic markets using a “produced by women” label.
- **Box 7.5, Sabina Hernandez: From victim to board member**, profiles a small-scale Peruvian coffee farmer-turned-community activist. Her story captures the impact of Café Femenino on one woman's life, and illustrates what happens when a woman's agency is built up.
- **Box 7.6, Gay Smith: Creating a “produced by women” label**, brings in another perspective – that of a businesswoman's leadership in a head office. This profile shows that a product marketed as produced by women can have an impact on the people all through the chain, including the leading firm.

### Box 7.3. Using “produced by women” labels, seals and standards

**Entry point.** Women-only seals and labels communicate to consumers and other actors in the value chain that the product is produced by women and that gender equity among producers is addressed.

**Why do it?** Labels and seals increase the visibility of women producers, who gain income from the premium provided by the additional price earned through the seal. The fact that the product was produced by women adds to its value. These economic benefits are a motivating force for both men and women producers.

- To expand markets and to increase sales.
- To bring higher incomes directly to women producers.
- To provide stability within the coffee cooperative.
- To support women within a mixed-gender cooperative through the creation of women’s groups.
- To improve the quality of the product.
- To generate male support within the family for the women’s business endeavours.
- To build women’s sense of pride and dignity by supporting them to have their own product, their own business and their own income.

**How to do it?** Through a “produced-by women” label, women’s involvement in the chain is made visible, and it is celebrated and incentivized. The label or seal allows communication between producers and buyers (in the case of a label up to the final consumer) as to who produces the item. The traceability systems required for a standard or label provide assurance through the entire chain that the product sold was actually produced by women and in a sustainable way. A label gives a recognizable identity to a social movement, and allows consumers and other actors in the value chain to be part of this movement.

#### **When is it a good strategy?**

- Where women are marginalized or unrecognized for their value chain contributions.
- Where market differentiation can be a selling point and earning point.
- Where a woman-only label will not restrict existing channels or chains.
- Where added value is necessary (e.g., prices are otherwise uninteresting).
- Where a company wants to address gender equity at the producer level.
- Where the religious or cultural context is amenable to women’s participation.
- Where the market and buyer are keen.
- Where it’s about social justice and women’s empowerment (not just money!).
- Where funding is available for capacity development and pre-financing.
- Where management is supportive.

## Box 7.4. Organic honey in Ethiopia

The Zembaba union is an umbrella organization of nine beekeeper cooperatives in the Amhara region in Ethiopia. These cooperatives specialize in developing and marketing bee products. In 2007, the union's 3,730 members (666 women) produced 80 tons of honey, five tons of bees' wax, and 0.1 tons of propolis. These products were certified as organic by BCS Öko-Garantie, an accredited certification body.

But the union did not manage to find an exporter, so could not earn the premium it had hoped for. The producers received no tangible benefits, despite their efforts and their success in complying with organic standards. They did not renew the organic certificate.

But the story does not end here. The honey was re-branded as "AMAR Pure Organic Honey" and won recognition in the national market. AMAR is now the registered trademark of the union. It gives both men and women beekeepers better prices.

Learning from this failed attempt to enter certified markets, Oxfam GB changed its support strategy for Zembaba. First, it focused more on increasing women's membership and enhancing production. Also, it looked for market opportunities to promote organic honey produced by women beekeepers. It made promising contacts with Ambrosia, a local honey processor. This company agreed to export the honey and to market it as produced by women. Ambrosia's interests are not only profit-based: it also wants to fulfil corporate social responsibility goals.

To facilitate this process, negotiations have started with the Ethiopian representative of the organic certification body as well as with the Fairtrade Labelling Organization. Oxfam GB's goal is to mobilize at least 50% of women in the cooperatives and help them to produce organic and specialized honey for the export market.

*More information: Gizachew Sisay, Oxfam GB, Ethiopia*

## Case 7.1 Café Femenino: Empowering women in rural Peru

*Gay Smith*

Sipping her morning cup of coffee in her cosy East Village apartment in New York City, Janet noticed a small label saying “Café Femenino” on the coffee packet. She knew that this coffee was organic and Fairtrade certified. She likes to buy products that give back to farmers. But “female coffee?” What could that mean? Janet did not know that all the beans in her cup were grown by women in the Andes of northern Peru. And part of the cost of her morning pick-me-up would find its way back into the hands of those same women.

Life is not easy in isolated Andean valleys, high in the mountains and far from most modern amenities. Poverty is the norm, and there are few sources of income other than coffee. Only about one-third of the coffee farmers are organized and sell their coffee as a group; the rest depend on unreliable individual sales to intermediaries. As it is not always clear who owns the land, the farmers find it hard to get loans. Women grow food in small gardens and keep the odd cow, but output is not enough to feed the average family of five children. Girls generally marry between the ages of 12 and 16, lack education, and are largely marginalized. In rural Peru, some 70% of women are regularly subject to domestic abuse: sexual, physical or verbal. Despite all the work they do in the house and on the farm, women get little recognition, and their husbands control the income and make all the decisions.

### **Building business relationships takes time**

CICAP, an NGO promoting development in northern Peru, has been working in these coffee-growing valleys since 1990. It helped producers organize and improve their coffee farming. Several local associations eventually came together to form CECANOR, the North-East Coffee Bean Producers Central. That made it possible to train members in coffee production and marketing, offer them small loans, and enable them to share their experiences.

Organic and Fairtrade coffee offered a way for the farmers to earn more. In 1993, CICAP built its first contacts with OPTCO (Organic Products Trading Company), an organic coffee importer based in Washington state, USA. After working with OPTCO for 10 years, CICAP had the idea to provide additional benefits and motivations for women in northern Peru. It proposed separating the women’s coffee from the men’s, and marketing it separately. OPTCO loved the idea, and together they developed Café Femenino.

Each actor has a specific role. CICAP educates the women in coffee farming, finance, leadership, and organization skills. PROASSA, an export company set

up by CECANOR, manages the final processing and export of the coffee. OPTCO imports the beans and is responsible for marketing the “Café Femenino” label.

The Café Femenino label, trademark and logo tell consumers like Janet that this is a product produced by women. By buying it, they are directly supporting women coffee producers. The organic and Fairtrade certification assures a verifiable audit trail. An independent inspector checks if the product fulfils these standards, including whether women farmers did in fact produce the coffee. In addition to the Fairtrade and organic premium, OPTCO requires that CECANOR pay an extra premium to the women directly.

The women’s coffee is clearly distinguished from the moment it is harvested to the moment it is sold as a ground coffee. For example, in transport the burlap sacks of coffee are tied with pink threads or have a small card with the logo. OPTCO goes to great lengths to also assure direct involvement of other actors to contribute to improving the position of women. The processors, roasters and retailers are encouraged to tell the story of Café Femenino in their marketing and, when possible, to have women working and handling the coffee as it travels to the consumer. Roasters are not allowed to blend Café Femenino coffees. They are more than happy to comply, as this is one of their best-selling products. The roasters are also required to make a small charitable donation that benefits women either in their own community or in producing countries through the Café Femenino foundation.

The market has responded well, and Café Femenino has been going strong for seven years. In 2009, a total of 600 tons of Café Femenino coffee was exported, half of it from Peru. The secret to success is the long-term relationship between all actors, and especially their mutual trust, respect, and commitment. For CECANOR, the success of the trademark brings recognition to the entire cooperative, and both men and women producers take pride in this accomplishment. Women coffee producers consider Café Femenino as their own business, and they show a great deal of pride in their product. The consistently high quality of the coffee reflects this.

### More than a cup of coffee

So Janet’s morning brew is not just an ordinary cup of coffee. For the women of northern Peru it is much more:

**Women have direct, independent income.** Over 6,000 women farmers receive their Café Femenino premium directly from CECANOR. This is their only direct income, and is enough to provide for new shoes for their children and school fees for their daughters, for example. This has potent effects and increases their respect in the community.

**Women’s self-worth has developed.** They have become able to pursue their own interests. The training and experience of running their own business have greatly increased their confidence. The women now proudly speak their minds in public and at cooperative meetings. One woman is on the board of the coop-



erative, and another has become mayor of her community. Many other women have developed successful small business plans in seed, animal breeding, weaving and embroidery.

**Men support women more.** A stunning change! The success of the brand motivates the husbands to support their wives to get involved as producers of Café Femenino coffee and to participate in the women's organization. They respect their wives and help out more in the house and with the kids. And domestic abuse has fallen.

**The villages are richer, cleaner and healthier.** The combined increases in income and in particular the increased access to assistance (through the training, the Café Femenino Foundation, etc.) has produced a big change. There are more goods on store shelves, there are latrines, and good nutrition and hygiene habits are slowly becoming everyday practices. Children are clean, and they have shoes to wear. Girls are now attending school. Men are taking care of household responsibilities.

**Motivating global change and recognition of women producers.** The Café Femenino model now been replicated in eight other countries, primarily in Central and Latin America, and several new programmes are under development. Today around 15,000 families worldwide directly enjoy the many benefits of this initiative. Over 100 roasters use the label of Café Femenino and promote it in key consumer countries: the United States, Canada, Australia and Britain. For the first time, the woman coffee producer is being recognized in the international market place.

**Wide social benefits.** The roasters donate to women's causes either in their own countries or to the producers via the Café Femenino Foundation. For the past six years this foundation has been to helping improve the healthcare, literacy and other aspects of life in the Andes and elsewhere.

## Analysing the change

This case demonstrates significant change across all four dimensions. The first step was for the women, who before merely picked coffee, to decide to separate their coffee from that of the men (a change in **chain activities**). Today they process and sell the coffee at the cooperative as well as roasting and selling coffee with the Café Femenino label in their own country.

The second change observed is in relation to **agency**. Before working with Café Femenino, women did not participate in meetings in the cooperatives. Through the programme, the women created their own organization under the CECANOR cooperative structure. They participate in training and meetings on quality and technical subjects. They run meetings, are political teachers, sit on the board of cooperatives, speak during public meetings, express their needs, make their own financial decisions, and run other micro-businesses.

The next set of changes relate to **chain governance**. In the beginning the women were not involved in the control or operation of the chain. Through training, they found their voice. They now participate and have a say in the workings of

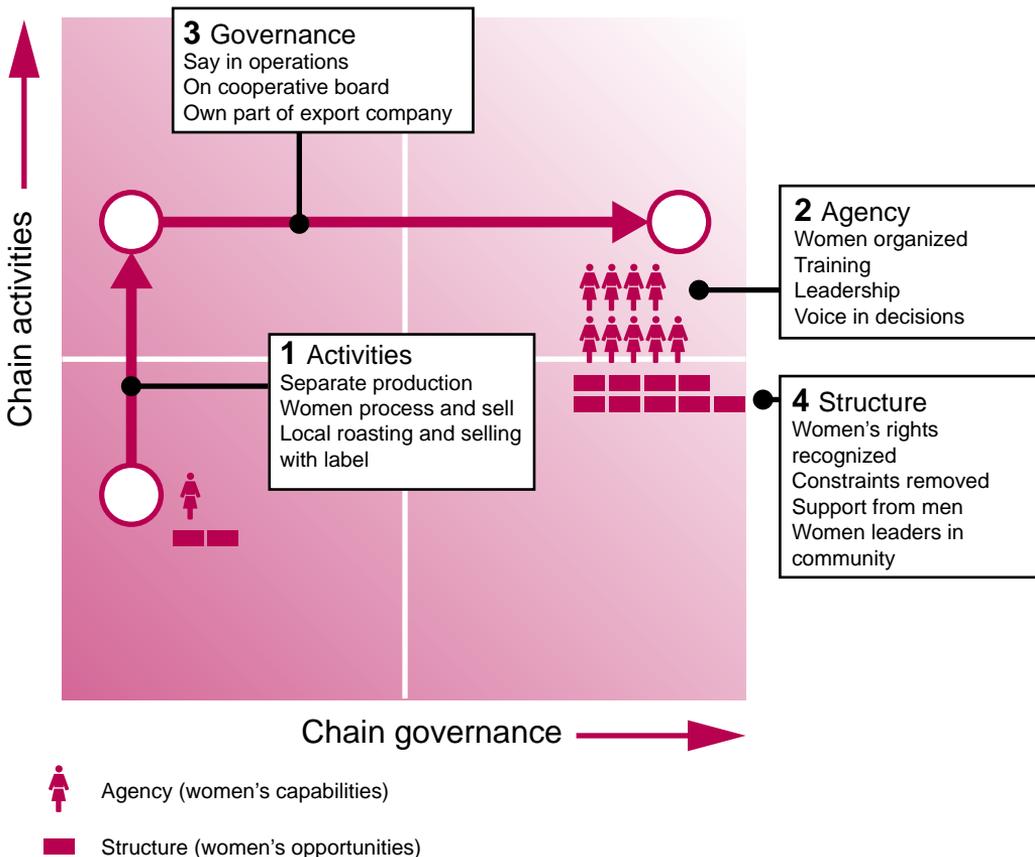


Figure 7.2. Changes in the coffee chain in Peru

their organizations. Today they sit on the board as directors of the cooperative and make decisions about sales. They also promote the label to other women in their regions. They are partners in the cooperative and have part-ownership of the export company.

The final dimension to change relates to **structure**. Barriers to women earning their own income have been removed. The cooperative and men in the community encourage their participation in political and community organizations and other businesses. Both women and men have been sensitized to understand and accept women's rights. Today there are no restraints within the cooperative for women's participation; instead, such participation is encouraged. Men now support women managing money and even believe women are better at it than they are. Husbands and wives make decisions together that affect their families. Communities elect women to political positions.

All these were big changes, as shown by the long arrows and the many icons at the top right of the matrix diagram. Changes in agency were the most significant. The relationship between increased agency through capacity building and pride of ownership positively influenced structural changes and women's roles in the chain governance. While the Café Femenino programme focuses on women's coffee production through the label, it also works with men to win over their support.

## Case 7.2 The “Con Manos de Mujer” standard in Guatemala

*Loren Estevez Cuevas*

Coffee farming in Guatemala is a family affair. Women and men spend day after day in the fields, taking care of the coffee trees, picking the ripe cherries during the three long months of harvest, and then drying them in the sun. It takes a lot of work. Sometimes the woman is the only person in the field: many men go to town to work as labourers, and are sometimes away for weeks on end. But when they come home, it is the men who collect payment for the coffee the family has delivered to the cooperative.

So women do a lot of the work, but benefit little. The man sells the coffee and controls the income. Women have few other chances in life, and their position in the family and village is clearly weaker than that of the men. Even if they wanted to do something to change this injustice, they lack the confidence to voice their concerns and say what they need.

This situation is replicated from one generation to the next. Many families in rural Guatemala send only their sons to school. The girls stay at home to learn household chores. When they go on to marry, they repeat this pattern with their daughters. Women tend to marry and have children at a young age, and do not have the opportunity to explore and develop their full potential.

### **With women’s hands**

A third-party-certified standard, Con Manos de Mujer (“with women’s hands”) is beginning to change this. This standard was created in 2009 by MAYACERT, a private company that provides certificates for organic, Bird Friendly, CAFE Practices and UTZ Certified farm products, among others.

This was not the first women-only standard that MAYACERT had helped develop. In 2007, it worked on a similar concept for a Guatemalan cooperative to develop a gender standard for coffee, Café de Mujer (“women’s coffee”). This was a big success: the coffee sold well and other producers wanted to join in. But the cooperative treated the certification standard as its own brand, and wanted a fee to allow other producers and buyers to use it. The other producers did not agree, so MAYACERT developed a new gender standard, Con Manos de Mujer.

Currently MAYACERT is testing opportunities to use the Con Manos de Mujer standard to certify other products made by women, such as cocoa, tea, cardamom, textiles and handicrafts.

The goal of the gender standard is to ensure that the women of Guatemala enjoy real economic benefits from their work, are included and recognized as producers, and receive the respect and dignity they deserve. They should be able to do

so regardless of who they are: a farm owner or landless; married, widowed, or a single parent; of any ethnicity; repatriated or victims of armed conflict. The gender standard distinguishes the work done by women and gives them due credit. It makes it possible to directly give these women producers a separate income. It recognizes the contributions that women make to their families and communities. Furthermore, a key requirement is that women be the owners or managers of the farm or field being certified.

So far, only one producer organization has been certified: the Asociación Barilense de Agricultores (ASOBAGRI), an association of coffee growers in the Huehuetenango region. ASOBAGRI also has other certificates: bird friendly, Fairtrade, organic – and sells its coffee to the United States, Europe and Japan. From a total membership of 1,053 small producers (men and women), 70 women received Con Manos de Mujer certification in 2009. ASOBAGRI separates coffee produced by women from the men's, as required by OPTCO, a buyer that markets coffee under the *Café Femenino* label (Case 7.1).

MAYACERT visits the producers and checks that its standards are upheld. Apart from ensuring that women indeed produce the product and own the land where it is grown, it also checks the quality and that production meets specific social, environmental, and business responsibility standards.

ASOBAGRI is mobilizing its women members to adhere to the Con Manos de Mujer standard and get certified. To achieve this goal, it has introduced organizational changes: there is a women's assembly within the organization, and the board of directors has received training in gender issues and management skills. The male members of the association have been very supportive and helped the women to organize every step of the process and to secure funding.



## From small beginnings

The members of the cooperative have seen constant improvement. In one year, the number of producers rose from 70 to 93, and is expected to reach 120 by 2011. In its first harvest, 40 tons of green coffee beans were sold to Royal Coffee and OPTCO, bringing \$1,600 under the Con Manos de Mujer standard. The women's assembly of the cooperative decided to use this premium as a joint health fund, to which the women can turn to pay for medical costs. The women like the idea of being certified producers; they are motivated and work with dedication. This dedication brings very high quality coffee to the market, which sells for a good price.

Additional help has reached the women producers of ASOBAGRI through contacts with the foundations Intermon Oxfam Guatemala and Generalitat Valenciana Spain, amongst others. The entire cooperative helped find this support. It assisted them in hiring a coordinator, who helps them implement and follow the standards of the certification and improve their processing equipment. The cooperative has also organized seminars on reproductive health and HIV for the women members.

ASOBAGRI has been helping the women members in other ways: providing coffee seedlings, making available credit to cover expenses between crop payments, providing scholarships for children, and building tanks for drinking water. The cooperative also makes it possible for women to participate in decision making in the organization.

## Analysing the change

The changes have been even across the four dimensions. The first changes were seen in relation to **structure**: a gender standard was developed and implemented, and a harvest certified as women-only was sold. Then **chain activities** changed to allow the implementation: the women's coffee was separated and certified. The third step was in terms of **agency**, as women attended training and began to have a voice in the cooperative. Finally, changes were seen in **chain governance** when a committee was put in place to allow women to collectively make decisions on income and the organization.

The entry point for this case was the development of a gender standard. Certifying farms managed or owned by women is a strong motivating force for women to get involved, and improves their financial situation and position in society. As their financial situation and position in society improved, men supported shifts in land ownership because of the extra income brought in by the women's coffee.

The most significant change in this case is the development of the gender standard itself – this structural change allowed the ball to start rolling and for women to be enthusiastic to participate.

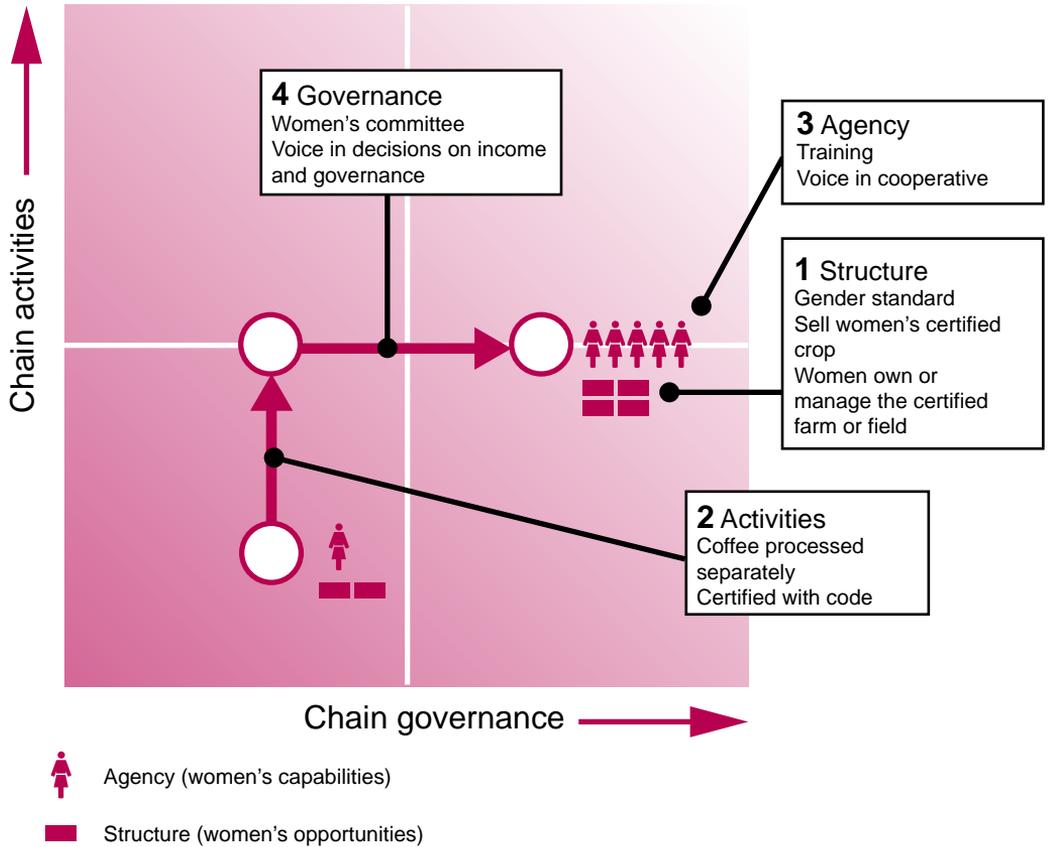


Figure 7.3. Changes in the coffee chain in Guatemala

## Products “produced by women”

Benefits on several levels emerge from these two cases: for the product itself; on the producers’ lives; on producing households, cooperatives and communities; and (further along the chain) on the importing company, roasters, and consumers; and on the social movement that is created.

### Product quality

The inclusion of seals and labels in a market strategy improves quality of the product, as we see in both cases. When given recognition through the label, women tend to view the product as their own business. They develop a sense of pride in and ownership of the product. They take more care in growing, harvesting and processing the crop. The result is better coffee. The importer of Café Femenino coffee also buys the coffee from the cooperative as a whole, from both men and women. In taste-tests, the Café Femenino women-produced coffee is consistently better than the general coffee produced by both men and women from the same cooperative. This observation bears more study.

### Producers’ lives

**Building women’s capacities.** Adhering to a standard is a stringent process that requires producers to use and document specific practices. It requires women to learn new techniques and skills. The women have shown they can do this.

For the Café Femenino label, the women are trained in leadership, organization, finance and gender as well as production techniques. They test their own coffee so they can understand what their buyers were looking for. As a result, the women



### Box 7.5. Sabina Hernandez: From victim to board member



Sabina Hernandez was one of the first women to join the gender and leadership training offered to the women by the CECANOR cooperative (see Case 7.1). She is a quiet woman, very small in stature, with a soft and restful voice and nature. Hardly the image you would envision for a powerful leader. Sabina's husband, who was known as the "town drunk", violently abused her. But she was determined to make a better life for herself. She took up the label of Café Femenino and encouraged other women to join the initiative.

Sabina is an intelligent woman. What she needed was an opportunity to change the conditions in her life. She became the first leader of the women's organization in CECANOR, and then served on the cooperative's board of directors. She also became the first woman president of the Bank of Agua Azul in the community where she lives and farms, and she is an influential political leader there. She is also a board member of the Peruvian Café Femenino Foundation. Her two children are students. She is an example of how a women's label is not just about coffee: it also represents hope and opportunity for the women who produce it.

*More information: Gay Smith, Café Femenino*

pick the best coffee cherries. High quality is important because it maintains the brand's reputation and contributes to a stable market – as can be seen from the Con Manos de Mujer seal.

The women also learn how to manage income, create business plans, and ask for what they need. This has side-effects: the women have created small businesses in animal breeding and seed production, so diversifying their income. Relationships built during meetings mean that members now help each other more.

**Recognition, pride and dignity.** Labelling brings the women in the chain to the forefront. The design and marketing of the Café Femenino label celebrate the value of the women's work. The Con Manos de Mujer seal ensures the involvement of the woman in the cooperative.

Pride is an important motivation. Women gain a sense of pride and dignity from having their own product and their own business and income. For the woman who produces the product, the seal or label is an expression of ownership. She can see, marked on the sack of coffee beans, or on the label of the final product for sale, that her work is recognized. It is not just talk but a manifestation of her efforts and her labour. As the product succeeds in the market, her sense of self-esteem and confidence also grow. Technical training and capacity development become more meaningful to her as this process unfolds (Box 7.5).

An example of this change is visible in the demeanour of women in the Café Femenino programme in the six years since it began. In the first year, women tended to hang their heads and were very timid and fearful. A year later, they were still shy, but were beginning to express themselves. Two years later, they were very animated. By the end of six years, the women were confident, had a grace and

dignity reflective of emotional maturity, and were able to address mixed groups and groups of men. It is a highly visible build-up of agency.

**Higher incomes for producers.** A gender-focused label differentiates the product for consumers, making it unique in the marketplace. That can create a niche market, or can create new or expand an existing market. It may also make it possible to charge consumers a higher price. The increased earnings are passed back to the producer.

The consumer's choice to buy a women-produced label translates into additional income for the producer. MAYACERT, the certification body, says that the premium price for organic coffee is 20–30% more than conventional coffee. This means higher prices for certified producers. Because all farms or fields certified to the MAYACERT gender standard are also organic, the women producers also earn the price premium.

Gender-based labels and seals indicate that the product is made by women. The MAYACERT seal, *Con Manos de Mujer*, verifies that the women farmers are paid directly. That is important because otherwise the head of household might take the money. The label makes women visible in the value chain.

**New markets.** In the Ethiopian organic honey story (Box 7.4) we saw the benefits of promoting a woman's product – it was an alternate market. When organic sales failed to generate profit, a nationally targeted woman's brand proved successful. The challenge is now how to bring together the organic and fair trade certification alongside the woman-produced branding to garner further premium prices for the producers.

### Household gender dynamics

Men often begin to support businesses of their wives, sisters and daughters when they see the women are earning money and improving the family budget. As the women's self-esteem improves, family dynamics change, and women and men begin to decide things together. They discuss how to spend the family income, and they tend to spend more on health, welfare and children's education. Some men can get jealous of their wives and try to withhold their income, so joint decision-making must be reinforced through training. In time this problem diminishes as higher incomes improve their lives. The men then become more encouraging and supportive of the women's efforts.

A woman who has her own business and income is seen by men in a new way. Having money creates a fairly quick cultural shift. When *Café Femenino* began in Peru, 70% of women were abused in some way. But higher incomes changed views towards women. This was reinforced by the women gaining self-respect, pressure from the cooperative, and training on gender. The women now report much less abuse.

## Cooperatives

One way to support women members of a mixed cooperative is to create women's groups. The formation of such a group is a requirement for Café Femenino producers and for the Con Manos de Mujer standard. Such groups create space for women and make it possible to give them information and support. They allow women to share ideas and discuss how to improve their and their families' situation. They make it possible to train women on finance, business or leadership, as well as topics such as health. Once the basic infrastructure of a women's organization is in place within a mixed cooperative, it is possible to have woman-only product lines.

But, you may ask, what about the men? Café Femenino label is involved with mixed cooperatives. The concept was first brought to cooperatives that OPTCO had a long-term relationship with. The confidence that had been developed through the years gave Café Femenino credibility with the male-led cooperatives. It is with such mixed cooperatives that the idea can demonstrate the greatest advances. The men all have stories about how their mothers and sisters have been mistreated. Many have daughters, and they see it in their own involvement with their wives. Working with mixed cooperatives makes it possible to have a bigger influence than working with all-female groups. When a woman is elected to the Board of Directors, as has happened in the Café Femenino programme in Guatemala, it is very meaningful – especially when several men are also candidates for the position.

Both Café Femenino and MAYACERT have seen the effect of drug-money laundering. Money launderers try to buy unprocessed coffee from cooperative members. For farmers certified to the MAYACERT standard, the organic premium gives them an incentive not to sell to such buyers. In the case of Café Femenino, the women have a similar incentive, but also want to maintain their coffee's identity: they are loyal to the label and what it represents in their lives. In both cases, participation in a woman-only programme has brought stability to the cooperative.

**Support from the top management of the cooperative.** A cooperative's board of directors must fully support the Café Femenino label before the programme can be implemented. A board meeting takes place to explain the concept and criteria. A general assembly is then held to decide whether to support the programme. If the male leaders support the Café Femenino programme, other men members tend also to give their support. In the case of Con Manos de Mujer seal, the cooperative must find a buyer to market the product before the cooperative purchases the seal.

Con Manos de Mujer is not yet a recognized seal in the marketplace. It does not necessarily appear on the consumer packaging. Once the importer imports the coffee, it is the roaster who decides how to market it. So a consumer link is not mandatory in this example.

### Box 7.6. Gay Smith: Creating a “produced by women” label



Gay Smith began working for a coffee-roasting company in 1987. In 1990, she and her husband, Garth, started OPTCO, a company to import organic coffee, help small producers improve the quality of their coffee, and develop specialty coffee markets. In 2003, women coffee farmers proposed to Garth to separate the women’s coffee. He was at a loss. He asked his wife what they could do with women’s coffee.

A light bulb went on for Gay: “I don’t think you are supposed to do anything, this one’s for me.” In the weeks that followed the vision of what was to be Café Femenino took shape: the name and the logo captured the intention.

Gay has been the impetus behind the development of Café Femenino programmes in Peru, Guatemala, Bolivia, Colombia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Rwanda. She is also the founder and a volunteer for the Café Femenino Foundation. Her decision to take up the concerns of women coffee farmers has had an immense impact: it has touched the lives of 6,000 women farmers, as well as roasters and consumers along the chain.

But it has changed Gay’s life too. She went from being responsible for the financial business of her and her husband’s coffee import company and overseeing daily operations, to providing leadership for a new initiative that is changing women’s lives. She and her husband continue to manage OPTCO, but she spends 80% of her time to develop and advance women participating in the programmes worldwide. She is often out of the office inspiring the public and the coffee industry on how a private company can address the challenges faced by so many women, particularly in developing nations.

*More information: Gay Smith, Café Femenino, [www.optco.com](http://www.optco.com), [www.cafefemenino.com](http://www.cafefemenino.com)*

### Beyond producers

It is possible to engage actors further along the chain, such as roasters, in supporting programmes that contribute to the welfare of women, the family and the community. Café Femenino works with about 6,000 women producers and over 100 roasters. The trademark was first seen on the market in 2004. Its coffee boasts a (mostly) female chain from producers to roasters. It links the work of these women in Peru with coffee drinkers in consuming countries, and with the Femenino Foundation’s work to support vulnerable women in both North and South.

Café Femenino requires roaster to donate at least \$0.05 per pound to either a woman’s crisis organization of their choice or to the Café Femenino Foundation. Café Femenino Foundation funds grant requests to groups of women who now have a voice because of the coffee programme. Grants go to fund economic, social, education, health and emergency aid. These grants contribute to the value of the label, to the market support for the label, and to the recognition of the women.

Café Femenino has had an impact on producers, roasters, consumers and even the company that started it. As we see in Gay Smith’s profile (Box 7.6), agency at the company level has also increased.

## Companies

**Expand markets and increase sales.** In any enterprise, a central goal is to grow the business and thereby increase incomes and profitability. This is also the case in using a “produced by women” label or seal. The hope is that the consumer will see the image, be engaged by what it represents, and buy the product rather than something else. For example, consumers may believe that organic products are healthier than their conventional equivalents for them and their family and for the grower. Many consumers are concerned about the environment, so they buy organic food to support sustainable production. It is important that the seal convey clearly what it is representing and that the seal developers consider who the consumers, where they are, and what motivates them.

## Consumers

**Raising consumer awareness and solidarity.** A label or seal raises awareness among consumers about the producers’ situation. It builds loyalty to the product, and consumers buy the product because they want to support the values behind it. To gain market support it is important that a label expresses that the product is produced by women. Women represent the majority of shoppers internationally (e.g., 85% in the United States<sup>1</sup>) and respond well to the idea of solidarity with producers. A label that highlights women’s participation aims to generate a sense of solidarity between women in producing and consuming countries. A new seal or label should be easily identifiable throughout the value chain and must communicate that the product is produced by a woman in order to create the woman-to-woman connection.

For Café Femenino, compliance requires a relationship with the consumer – a connection to the ultimate supporter of the seal. A direct relationship with consumers is nurtured through the Café Femenino programme, where women producers are encouraged to share their experiences, hardships, and successes. The programme coordinators meet the women’s groups every month. Successes are reported, and it is the women producers themselves who enforce compliance through their relationship with the coordinators.

## Social movement

**A label provides an identity for the social movement.** Labelling involves the consumer in the gender equity movement. It mobilizes international market recognition and support for women through spending on consumer items. By telling a story and raising awareness through labelling, the consumer is informed and possibly inspired. On a given grocery shelf there are hundreds of labels, reflecting greater awareness of food, how it is processed and where it is from. Labels that communicate about development issues and gender have become a point of interest in the marketplace. All Café Femenino coffees must be identified with the Café Femenino logo and name. The Con Manos de Mujer seal identifies that the coffee is produced by women, but it is not required to put it on the package.

1 [www.she-economy.com/facts-on-women](http://www.she-economy.com/facts-on-women)

The Café Femenino logo gives its producers a sense of identity and pride, much like a club. The women wear shirts and hats and carry bags bearing the logo. The Café Femenino programme addresses self-esteem and self-value.

Labelling makes it possible for the consumer to be a part of this social movement by buying the product. Café Femenino educates consumers about the coffee farmers' condition. This requires a clear, easily identified label, a clear story, a unifying message and design. The Café Femenino programme has taken great efforts to stand apart from the confusion and noise in the marketing world. This clarity and success make it attractive for other groups of producers to join the programme. The Con Manos de Mujer standard is also available to other cooperatives who meet the requirements and undergo the third-party certification necessary.

### **Conclusion: When is “produced-by-women” a good strategy?**

This subchapter reflects a variety of entry points for the “produced by women” approach. By its nature, this approach is gender-specific, and gender redistributive. Several conditions for success come to the fore in considering if marketing or certifying that a product is produced by women is a good strategy.

**Look at the existing value chain** before launching a gender label or seal to be sure that it will not restrict existing channels or chains. The label or seal should not prevent anyone in the chain from advancing or participating. If an existing market already provides benefit and good prices, there may be few benefits of changing the chain or the buyer: the losses or risks must also be taken into consideration. For example, if a label covers only women who own land, would it exclude women who rent or who work on land that is in their husband's name?

**Know thy market.** Is a seal needed? If a product is in short supply and a good market already exists, it may make little sense to add the expense of adhering to a standard (including certification) or invest in creating a new gender label. The same is true if the product already fetches a high price.

Caution is needed when the market itself is restrictive. Do a market study to be sure the market will accept a new label or seal. A gender label that makes the product more expensive is not a good idea if higher prices put consumers off. Selling the idea of gender may not work in certain countries. Other ways to change the producers' situation may be better.

**Religious/cultural constraints** must be handled with care and in the women's best interests. If participation in adhering to a standard or the requirements behind a label or seal goes against religious beliefs or cultural norms, it could actually put the women involved in a dangerous position. Some resistance is to be expected when changes in relations between men and women are a goal.

**Marginalization.** Gender labels make sense only where women feel marginalized. In matriarchal cultures or advanced societies, women may not feel a need for such support. If there is no felt need or desire for change, then the expense and time commitment needed to develop and implement a seal simply do not make sense.

**Understanding consumer interest.** Partnerships between producers and private business (such as importers) can help local women understand what interests consumers and what they are willing to pay extra for. A strong market link is critical to the success of a women-only label. With Café Femenino the importer got the process going and found the money for training. The importer also had a ready market for the new label through its existing customer base, simplifying implementation and reducing the risk of introducing a new product. The partnership made it possible to understand what was needed for consumer acceptance and ensured legal protection for the mark.

**Justice comes first.** A “produced by women” seal should not be used just to make money. A concern for social justice and women’s empowerment should be the driver. The goal of a gender seal is gender equality. If profit is the only purpose, the initiative will fail, as only the company benefits, not the women producers. In fact, the women may end up being exploited further. Both our cases show how the producers benefited: the Con Manos de Mujer seal requires that the women cooperative members get training, while Café Femenino requires training as well as having a social programme in place.

**Funding.** External funding is often needed to pay for the seal development, the certification process, training and compliance. In addition, pre-financing from development partners (e.g., through a special credit line) helps get things started. MAYACERT found that ASOBAGRI, the coffee cooperative it certified, needed external funding to train women. It is seeking external support for this. For Café Femenino, the importer got funding from Cordaid, among others. Importers do not normally take responsibility for development activities, but this was important for the success of the initiative.

Without funding, it may not be practical to proceed. The Café Femenino programme has had 10 years of development support, with Cordaid providing credit to the producers. Funding and partnerships support individual programmes until they become sustainable. The importer is seeking other sources of credit when the current funding ends.

The strategy in the Ethiopian example (Box 7.4) was to increase women’s membership and leadership, then approach a certifying agency and a company which installed processing equipment, and then to promote women’s honey (see also Case 5.2). This was similar to the approach used by Café Femenino and Con Manos de Mujer. Before starting the certification process, a cost-benefit analysis related to adherence to the standard is required: obviously, the price premium must more than cover the certification costs.

**Management support.** The cooperative’s board of directors must fully support women’s participation.

**Get an exporter on board.** For the Ethiopian organic honey case, no exporter meant no market, and no benefits for the producers. The importance of having an exporter on board if a group chooses to follow the route of certified production is very clear in this case. A key lesson is to secure a market before investing in

the costly process of compliance and certification. Without an exporter, the additional effort required for organic production may not yield the desired results. For Café Femenino in Peru, having an exporter ready to buy the product was also key. Like the honey, this women-only coffee brand and label is also organic and Fairtrade certified.

A “produced by women” strategy can be supported by development organizations when there is a clear market niche, a committed company and where women feel marginalized and want and need support in transforming their life situation. It is a strategy that reaches all the way through the chain right to the consumer, in the case of labelled products and in this way it can be the centre piece of a social movement, raising awareness of gender inequity and stimulating support throughout the chain.

### Situating the arguments

Social justice and poverty reduction arguments come out very strongly in programmes that specifically target women suppliers, roasters and consumers. The development of women-only labels or seals and gender standards is very much based on this **social justice** rationale: supporting women in producing countries to participate in a sustainable chain. The standards or criteria behind the label or seal are the entry point for social change.

For example, the Con Manos de Mujer standard states that women must become land-owners or managers to comply with the standard. This standard itself is a structural change in which rules sanction and support women in a variety of ways. The unfair situation where women were not compensated for their contributions and could not own or manage their means of their production, lead to the development of a standard that would take steps to rectify it.

Café Femenino involves women throughout the chain in its programme, and targets **female roasters, consumers and producers**. Women do indeed present new market opportunities as buyers (and roasters), suppliers (the female coffee farmers) and consumers. The motivation for the company was to **reduce the poverty** of the region, as well as the need for social justice for the marginalized women living there.

For Café Femenino, building women’s agency was the entry point, with poverty and social justice the main drivers. The company emerged to improve women’s situation in a marginalized area through a market-based solution: women-produced coffee. However, in both the Café Femenino and Con Manos de Mujer initiatives, chain performance improved alongside women’s empowerment. Clearly business objectives were met alongside empowerment objectives. A focus on women’s coffee was good for women and for the economy. And the **company’s reputation**



was bolstered as well – both Café Femenino and OPTCO are recognized for the women’s coffee they sell and the impact on women farmers is well-known.

The honey example had a different starting point than the two coffee cases, and we do not know what impact it has had on women. Its business angle was to **expand market share** by selling an already organic and Fairtrade product as “produced by women”. The cases in this chapter reflect the business argument that women present new market opportunities as buyers and as final consumers. The branding or marketing of the product to tap into a new niche is central.

## 7.2 Making use of existing third-party certified standards

Social and environmental standards are voluntary, market-based mechanisms for providing incentives and verifying change. Standards seek improvement in management systems and a number of aspects: product quality and quantity, marketing and trading practices (such as transparency), environment (soil conservation, agrichemical use), health and food safety, and social issues (wages and child labour). Products that are certified have a logo or seal on their label that communicates to the consumer that the standards have been followed and verified by independent third-party auditors. Fairtrade, UTZ and Rainforest Alliance are examples of these kinds of standards. This subchapter takes a look at existing standards as a starting point for addressing gender equity.

Social and environmental standards have operated in developed and developing countries for the past 25 years or more. In most places there are no rules or laws to prevent women from taking part such schemes. But cultural norms and practices can stop them from doing so. Such structural barriers must be overcome. The most common social and environmental standards are not typically gender-sensitive and do not actively engage women farmers. That results in an unintentional or de-facto focus on men – on male farmers and processors.

While these standards do include indicators relating to some gender issues, generally the foray into gender is through the broader entry point of “non-discrimination”. But how this is interpreted across different contexts and countries and with different auditors can vary significantly. And discrimination related to gender is just one of many aspects of discrimination and may not be specifically prioritized by the auditor.

One solution is to develop a specific gender standard, as in the story of Con Manos de Mujer (Case 7.2). Another is to develop more comprehensive gender standards and indicators within existing standards, beyond a general “non-discrimination” clause. This is one part of the strategy described in this subchapter.

But the standards themselves are just one entry point for addressing gender within certified chains. The infrastructure needed for certification – traceability, documentation, data management system, regular farmer meetings, and so on

## Box 7.7. Piggybacking on existing standards and certification infrastructure

**Entry point.** Using openings created by social, environmental and organic standards and certification to address gender issues.

**Why do it?** First, addressing gender improves chain performance and gives greater financial rewards for production. Supporting women's participation improves compliance and chain performance: the certified chain performs better when gender issues are addressed.

Second, standards can allow gender issues to be addressed. Piggybacking on the infrastructure of the standard and certification to it (the premium, audit trail, learning groups, internal control systems and indicators) is an efficient way to get information and enable progress on gender issues: these channels already exist in certified chains.

### How to do it?

- Target women in capacity building, and help them be active in producer associations.
- Use the premium generated by certification to pay for gender-awareness activities.
- Use features of the standards and certification process, such as the audit trail and internal control system, to further gender initiatives.
- Develop separate gender standards and indicators to include in existing standards or for complementary use (dual certification).
- Make the internal control system specify the gender of the producer.

### When is it a good strategy?

When a farmer group is already certified to a social or environmental standard (Fairtrade, UTZ, organic and so on) and thus has a documentation and traceability system in place. Or, when a farmer group want to enter these markets.

### Conditions for success.

- Registering women as farmers within the cooperative.
- Developing and using gender-specific project and management tools, such as baseline surveys, impact assessment and training guidelines.
- Including gender from the start.
- Building on opportunities, including conducive government policies.

– can also be used to get moving on gender. This subchapter explores how the certification system for voluntary social and environmental and organic standards can be used to address gender in certified chains.

This subchapter looks at several cases of organic and other standards. It illustrates how the benefits and requirements of certification affect men and women differently. It reveals the chain-performance risks associated with gender inequity or gender blindness, and offers ways of overcoming them.

- **Case 7.3, Helping women benefit from organic farming in Uganda and Tanzania**, recounts the challenges faced by EPOPA, an organic export project in East Africa. The project used a gender-sensitive approach to make women's

contributions visible and allowed a new lens for evaluating the success of the project. A key lesson is to integrate gender from the start.

- **Case 7.4, Gender and geraniums: Ikirezi natural products in Rwanda**, explains how a development project set up after the 1994 genocide supported both women and organic production. Ikirezi, an alliance of cooperatives producing essential oils, emerged from this initiative. It has benefited from supportive government policies, and has led to changes both for hundreds of women and for the country as a whole.
- **Case 7.5, A new blend: Bringing women into the coffee chain in Kenya**, describes how a service provider is training women coffee producers, mill operators and cooperative managers in gender issues.

After presenting the main cases of the chapter we move into an analysis of how standards and certification offer openings for addressing gender in certified chains. A series of boxes show how requirements for organic certification are being used to address gender. This includes adjusting the standards and indicators themselves.

- **Box 7.8, The added value of certification**, explains how the Bukonzo cooperative in Uganda decided to get certified to the organic and Fairtrade standards so that it could use the extra money earned to continue its gender programme.
- **Box 7.9, Traceability is the same – for organic, Fairtrade or gender**, illustrates how the organic audit trail makes it possible to support Café Femenino’s women-only coffee line. Once the required traceability system is in place for organic certification, a product can also be traced for other things – such as whether a woman produced it.
- **Box 7.10, Gendered internal control system**, describes an internal control system for organic production that has added gender dimensions, and explains how the data can improve the chain’s functioning.
- **Box 7.11, The Con Manos de Mujer standard**, lists the principles that underlie this standard and provides a few examples relevant to gender issues.
- **Box 7.12, Developing gender indicators**, shows some thinking from a group of stakeholders from Central and South America on the kinds of gender indicators that could be included in existing social and environmental standards.
- Finally we look at how organically certified production can trigger enterprises that may work well for women. **Box 7.13, Making bio-pesticides for organic cotton – a better fit for women**, describes a spinoff industry that women found more suitable than working in the cotton fields.

These cases and boxes give a sense of how existing standards and certification can facilitate gender awareness and improve gender relations in the chains they apply to.

## **Case 7.3 Helping women benefit from organic farming in Uganda and Tanzania**

*Inge Vos*

Organic produce is big business for small farmers. It brings additional premiums and higher returns for their crops. It also reduces costs, because organic alternatives are cheaper than artificial fertilizers and pesticides. The financial benefits may take some years to materialize – but in the long run it can be a winning strategy for smallholders. Organic production is growing fast in Africa. But sometimes women benefit a lot less than men.

### **Turning on organics, but leaving half of the farmers behind**

From 1998 to 2008, two rural development organizations, Agro Eco (from the Netherlands) and Grolink (from Sweden) implemented the EPOPA (Export Promotion of Organic Products from Africa) programme in Tanzania and Uganda. Consisting of multiple, overlapping projects, the programme sought to develop organic smallholder farming and connect the farmers to export markets. The products included coffee, cocoa, sesame, honey, cashew, pineapple, spices, shea and lemongrass. Agro Eco and Grolink worked closely with established exporters and their network of field officers. They trained the field officers, who in turn trained farmers, helped find markets together with the exporters, and helped secure organic certificates for the produce. Overall, the organic produce sold well, and the farmers benefited from higher premiums and higher income due to improved production methods.

But there was a problem: men farmers benefited much more than the women. Men went to the training events, and women did most of the work in the field. Most of the field officers were men: women farmers did not feel comfortable going to the field or working closely with them. Some husbands got suspicious and prohibited their wives from being alone with the field officers. Plus, the field officers worked with registered farmers, and in male-headed households this is almost always the man. The women farmers got little attention, attended few training and extension activities, and did not learn about organic production techniques. The men tended to control the income, and they spent it differently from women: they usually covered big expenditures but neglected daily needs like food, soap and household utensils. So the increased income did not greatly improve the situation of the family or of the women.

### **Bringing in gender**

In March 2006, the EPOPA management team discussed a study by the Danish Institute for International Studies on gender and food security in two EPOPA projects in Uganda. The management team decided to integrate gender equity into

all its activities. This initiative included gender analyses to measure the impact on men and women in two EPOPA projects in Uganda and two in Tanzania. After this, a gender action plan was developed and implemented.

**Measuring impacts of organic farming on women.** The effects of organic production varied greatly, depending on the local context and commodity. In one organic coffee enterprise, food production went down because farmers used land to grow coffee. As a result, the women, who traditionally grow food crops and sell any surplus, now had less land to farm. They still worked alongside the men in the coffee plots, and the family's income went up, but less of it went to the women.

In an organic pineapple farming enterprise, however, there were only positive effects. Expanding pineapple growing and improving management were possible because of additional investments in land and hired labour. There was no need to reallocate land away from food crops. The average farm sizes were large, and incomes from pineapples were relatively high.

**Integrating gender.** Collecting separate data about men and women is simple, but it is not common practice. Addressing gender-based inequalities, on the other hand is complex and requires multiple approaches. One approach to gather information is by holding focus-group discussions with men and women. The meetings took place separately, but the findings are discussed as a group in order to promote working together, reduce potential resistance, and emphasize the joint interests shared by all participants. Other tools, the baseline survey and impact assessments, were adapted to generate data on both men and women.

The company or cooperative that is certified as organic runs an internal control system. It keeps files on all farmers, and staff visit them at least once a year to check that they are complying with the organic standards. The control system manual was revised to include a gender-sensitive approach.

A brochure on organic agriculture and gender was developed for field officers and distributed to the exporter partners. It gives practical advice on how to look at their work through a gender lens. It provides tips on how to discuss gender issues with farmers.

A guideline for gender-sensitive training was developed. This informs trainers about gender issues, such as men's and women's different time and travel needs. It also gives them tools to use with both men and women. EPOPA trained field officers on gender in organic agriculture and the programme's gender action plan.

### Insights from a gender lens

Employing more female field officers is a good way to reach women farmers. Men are unlikely to object, and the field officers serve as role models as successful, respected women in agriculture.

Collecting separate data about men and women revealed that men were 89% of the registered farmers and 77% of the participants in training. Many farmers thought that they had to own land to register as organic farmers – which is not

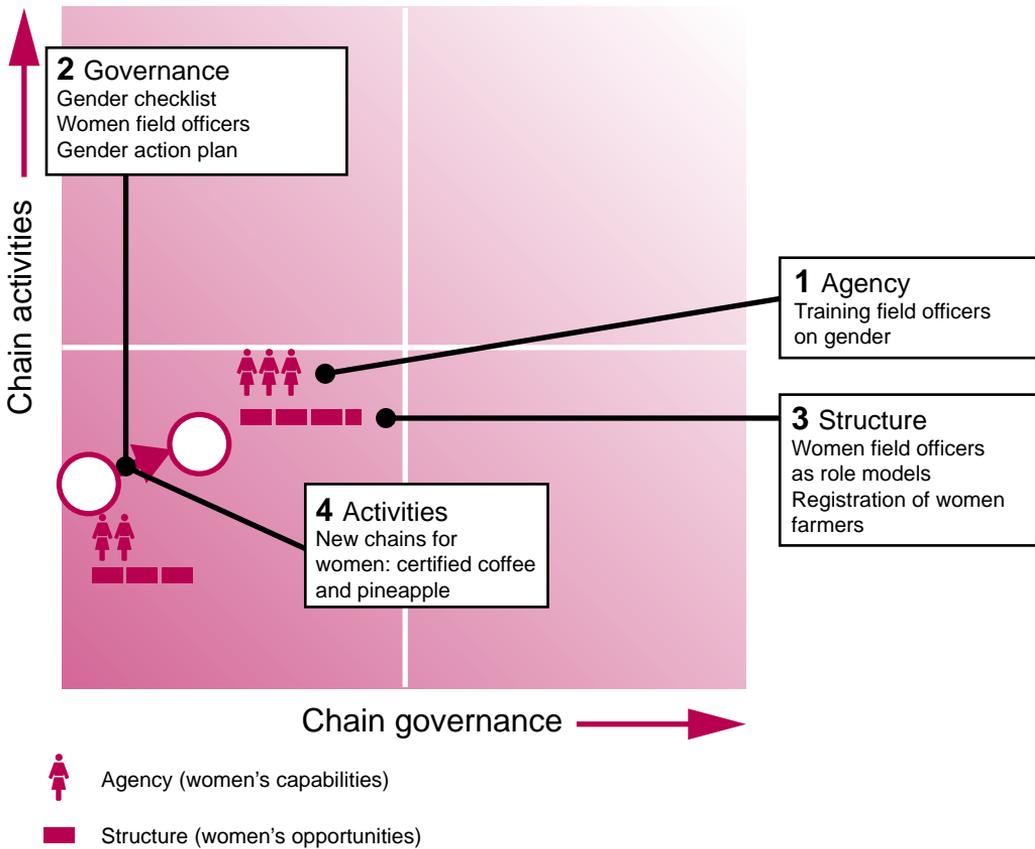


Figure 7.4. Changes in the organic products chain in Uganda and Tanzania

the case. EPOPA started to promote registration of individual female farmers, as well as joint registration of wives and husbands. These are simple and effective ways for women farmers to benefit from growing organic crops.

### Analysing the change

The first intervention was to train field officers on gender (**agency**), employ more female field officers, create gender checklists and develop an action plan to mainstream gender in the EPOPA process (**chain governance**). The female field officers acted as role models for women farmers, and showed the men that women could fulfil this function also. This led to a change in cultural norms and perceptions (**structure**). Finally, women were able to work in different chains – coffee and pineapple (**chain activities**).

These initiatives had a very modest impact. In fact, the most significant changes are beyond the dimensions we have used: gathering gender-disaggregated data, holding focus-group discussions with men and women, and adapting survey and impact assessment tools. The project also revised its manuals and produced a brochure to raise gender awareness. These activities are the basis for the changes in the four dimensions of the diagram.

## Case 7.4 Gender and geraniums: Ikirezi natural products in Rwanda

*J. Richard N. Kanyarukiga*

Essential oils – aromatic, volatile oils distilled from flowers and other plants – are what give perfumes their aroma. They are a vital ingredient not only in perfumes, but also for pharmaceuticals and food processing.<sup>1</sup>

Rwanda, with its warm climate and good rainfall, is an ideal place to grow many of the plants that yield these oils. Indeed, under Belgian colonial rule, farmers grew geraniums and extracted their oil. After independence in 1962, however, the geranium fields were converted to other crops, and the distillation equipment fell into disrepair. Several small-scale efforts were made to revive the industry, but they failed to achieve commercial success.

Then in 1994 came genocide and war. Millions were killed or displaced. Among the survivors, thousands of women were widowed and left without a livelihood, and many children were left orphaned.

As part of the recovery efforts, the government and international donors encouraged people to form self-help groups and explore promising sources of income. In 2002, Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products (ASNAPP, a South African-based NGO) studied the potential for producing and marketing various agricultural products in Rwanda. It recommended essential oils, particularly geranium and eucalyptus, as attractive agribusiness opportunities.

Shortly thereafter, ASNAPP and World Relief Rwanda launched a joint project to study the viability of commercializing geranium oil. Initial funding came from the United States Agency for International Development. The project organized 100 women farmers into two associations and trained them to grow and manage geraniums. It imported Bourbon-type geraniums from South Africa, installed two 200-kg capacity distillation units, and obtained eco-certification for the land and facilities.

### **Ikirezi**

At the end of the project in 2005, a community-based company called Ikirezi Natural Products was founded to continue the work. This company now produces high-quality essential oils for export to Europe. The product line has expanded to include organic geranium, lemongrass and eucalyptus oils. All are 100% organic.

Ikirezi now has four member cooperatives with 500 members, almost all widows and orphan girls (who have since grown up). The cooperatives are also part of a larger African network of essential-oil producers.

<sup>1</sup> More information: [www.ikirezi.com](http://www.ikirezi.com)

The government has done much to support initiatives like Ikirezi. It encourages women to organize into producer cooperatives, has put in place a conducive policy framework, and has mandated the Rwanda Bureau of Standards to supervise and enforce observance of standards as well as coordinate eco-certification. It also challenged international NGOs to focus on the most needy, particularly women and vulnerable groups.

### Smelling sweet

Their aromatic product has brought many changes for the women producers. Their sales of oil mean an income to spend on basic needs as well as education, health care and improved housing. Ikirezi has expanded, admitting more members and acquiring more land to boost production. Members have diversified their businesses into dairying and shops.

The community and country benefit too. As poverty has receded, mutual trust and partnership have replaced conflict. Ikirezi stresses the need for peace and harmony through its core values: dignity, community, sustainability, collaboration and *ubuntu* – a Kinyarwanda word meaning grace, humility and compassion.

The confidence exhibited by Ikirezi's members has inspired neighbourhoods across the country. Several other women's and other groups now use the Ikirezi strategy. More stakeholders are also getting involved and are investing more in their support, and encouraging others to follow suit.

### Analysing the change

This case is unusual in that the context – policies and post-genocide conditions – were the first changes (**structure**). These structural changes paved the way for women working in a new chain – producing geranium oil (**chain activity**). Many of the changes in **agency** happened at a societal level: for example, they involved things like equality across ethnic divisions, with confidence, mutual trust and partnerships replacing ethnic conflict. The capacity to prioritize inclusion both in terms of ethnicity as well as gender was stimulated at a national level. Finally, the inspiration that Ikirezi has provided to others make it, and its members, leaders in the sector (**chain governance**).

The most significant changes were in terms of agency. These occurred in a volatile setting: post-genocide Rwanda. The choice to work with women and certified organic essential oils is not about women's empowerment or chain performance so much as the need to create a livelihood. Supportive government agricultural policies related to women in agriculture and organic production, alongside a context where a lot of land was abandoned, created an opportunity that Ikirezi Natural Products exploited.

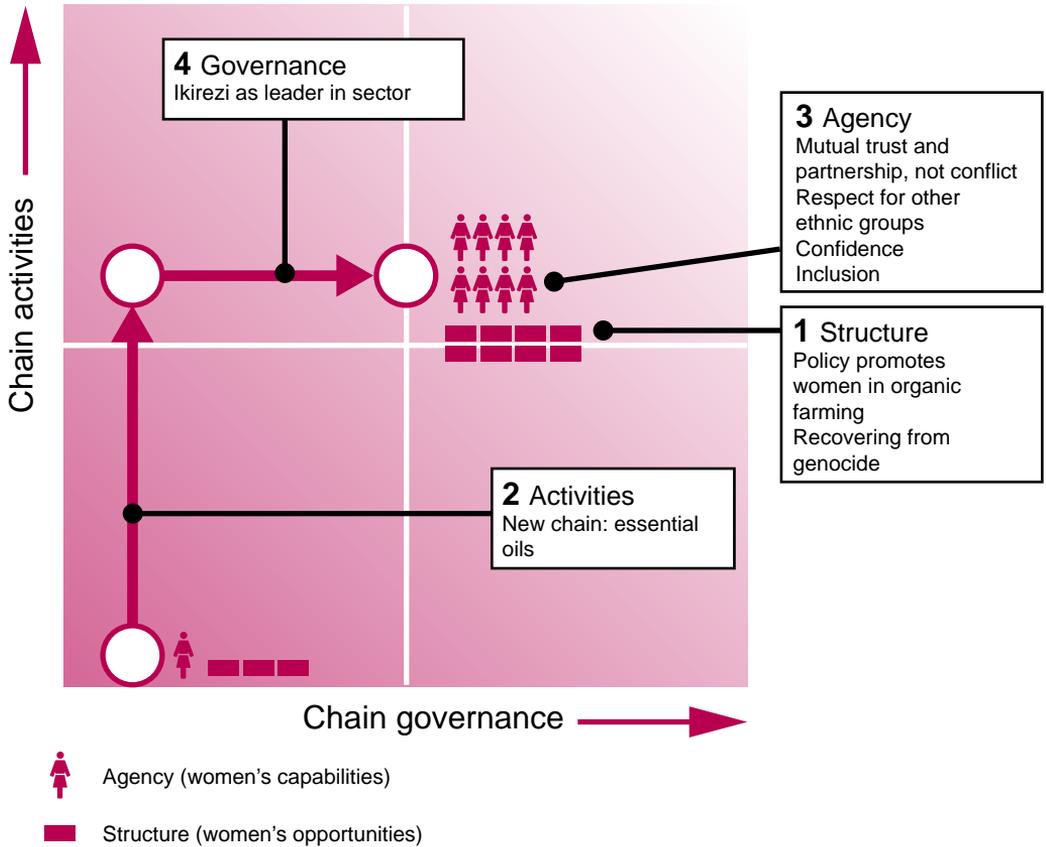


Figure 7.5. Changes in the essential oils chain in Rwanda

## Case 7.5 A new blend: Bringing women into the coffee chain in Kenya

*Peter Chege Nginya*

Coffee is big in Kenya. More than 500,000 smallholders grow it, and more than 6 million people earn their livings directly or indirectly from it. But over the past 10 years, both the quality and quantity of Kenyan coffee has been declining. Farmers earn less, and some even face grave poverty. That is a great concern for them, and for the government.

Could the problem be that coffee is a “male crop”?

Men do indeed do a lot of the work in coffee. They plant and prune, spray and sell. They work in the “wet mills”, where the outer layers of the coffee cherries are removed. They serve on the boards of the cooperatives that sell the coffee cherries.

But women do even more of the work. They do the tedious manual labour of weeding, composting and harvesting. They often carry the heavy bags of cherries on their backs to the mill.

But it is the men who get the money, and they rarely share it with their wives. That causes tensions: the women have little motivation to invest time and effort in coffee production: some even refuse to work with this crop altogether. The quality and volume of coffee plummet, bringing dire financial consequences on millions of people who depend on the strong coffee sector.

### **A focus on production and quality**

Clear problems? Maybe so, but it took almost all the duration of a 3-year project on coffee to fully assess the gender needs and to develop interventions to deal with them. In 2007, Sangana Commodities (K) Ltd., a branch of ECOM, a big international coffee trader, established Sustainable Management Services Ltd. to train coffee farmers and help them market their coffee. Hivos, a Dutch NGO which finances development projects worldwide, partnered with Sustainable Management Services to improve conditions for Kenyan coffee farmers. The partners focused on four cooperatives, with a total membership of 11,000, and 11 wet mills. They aimed to increase the production of premium-grade beans from 25% to 75%, increase the yield of coffee cherries from 1 to 5 kg per tree, and to improve the management of the cooperatives.

Many different types of people attended the training:

- The farmers nominated a pool of 250 promoter farmers. These promoters were trained in good agricultural practices (composting, safe use of agrochemicals, soil conservation, etc.) and certification standards. Each promoter then went on to train another 50 farmers, and established a demonstration plot to demonstrate the new practices.

- Eleven internal auditors were trained in auditing techniques, computer literacy, recordkeeping and other skills. Their job is to check compliance with standards and plans.
- The cooperative board members received training on quality management and the intricacies of the global coffee market.
- The managers of the 11 mills were trained on processing, environmental protection, and health and safety on the job.

Sustainable Management Services provided the farmers with market information to help farmers sell their coffee, either to Sangana or other buyers, and always focusing on getting the highest possible price.

### **Women grow coffee too?**

Quarterly review meetings were an essential way to check progress, review feedback and adjust activities to ensure maximum benefits. It was during these meetings that the challenges faced by women became clear and ideas were developed on how to help them. During the years of closely working with the cooperatives, Sustainable Management Services and Hivos learned about the many disadvantages that women faced and the benefits that passed them by. Almost no women attended training or sat on management boards. They got little of the income but did most of the work.

The project partners hired a consultant to do a value chain analysis from a gender point of view. This examined the gender division of labour, farm household dynamics and traditional roles and responsibilities of women and men in the coffee chain. The study's recommendations included raising awareness of gender issues in all parts of the chain, registering female farmers under their own names, implementing gender-sensitive policies in processing and marketing, promoting women's participation, passing bylaws for positive discrimination in cooperatives, and introducing more specific gender indicators in project monitoring and in the standard itself.

The project partners began implementing these recommendations with the four cooperatives. It also started similar work with three neighbouring cooperatives with 15,000 members and 19 mills, that approached Sustainable Management Services for assistance in 2009.

The male cooperative members have now begun to realize the potential of women farmers. They now know that if women do not take part in meetings, they will not learn certified farming and cannot contribute. The training model now includes gender-specific topics. A gender officer has been appointed. Farmers have elected a gender promoter for each mill, and 30% of the promoter farmers must be women. These women receive training in both coffee production and gender issues, then train other women farmers. This is an important change as women farmers tend to prefer women trainers.

## Coffee break

By the end of the project, good results were visible. Average production went up from 1 to 3 kg per tree. The eleven original mills saw a big jump in the coffee they processed, from 2.6 to 4 million kg. The percentage of premium grades shot up from 25% to 85%. The management boards could by themselves successfully plan, implement, and monitor their cooperative's work.

All four of the original cooperatives secured certifications from Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance or CAFE Practices (a standard supported by Starbucks, a big retailer). Certification opened new markets for the farmers and improved gender equity. The auditor from Fairtrade encouraged one of the cooperatives to include a woman on its management board and to increase the women staff at head office from one to four.

In all participating cooperatives, the capacity and position of women farmers has improved, along with awareness of women's importance in the cooperative. A pool of resource women is being created. The perception of coffee as a "men's crop" is changing. Some cooperatives have started to include women as board members because it brings new marketing opportunities: for example, one buyer specifically asked to purchase coffee from a cooperative that had women board members. Gradually, more women are registering as farmers, which automatically gives them rights to vote in their cooperative assembly. There is also a move towards more women having their own bank accounts or having joint accounts with their husbands. As women become more involved throughout the certified coffee chain, the quality and quantity of coffee improve, translating into higher incomes for smallholders. This strategy has promoted positive gender relations in society, and women are now seen as agents of change in the community. Now there are 20 gender promoters in the 20 wet mills, and they promote participation of women farmers. It is a small but promising beginning.

## Analysing the change

The first step in the process was to hire a gender consultant and study the situation. She recommended appointing gender promoters in each mill and ensuring that 30% of promoter farmers were women (**governance** issues). Training was organized at multiple levels in the chain: promoter farmers, internal auditors and board members (**agency**). As a result the perception of coffee as a male crop began to shift (**structure**). Changes in the training and promoters have improved the women farmers' capacities, enabling them to produce better-quality coffee (a shift in **chain activities**).

The entry point in this case was chain performance: the coffee quality and quantity were falling, and gender inequity was seen as the cause. Women farmers are essential for achieving development objectives and securing compliance with organic and Fairtrade standards. The smallest change occurred in chain activities, with other shifts being somewhat bigger. It took considerable time and effort to identify the problem. This was vital because this understanding was the basis for the success of the interventions.

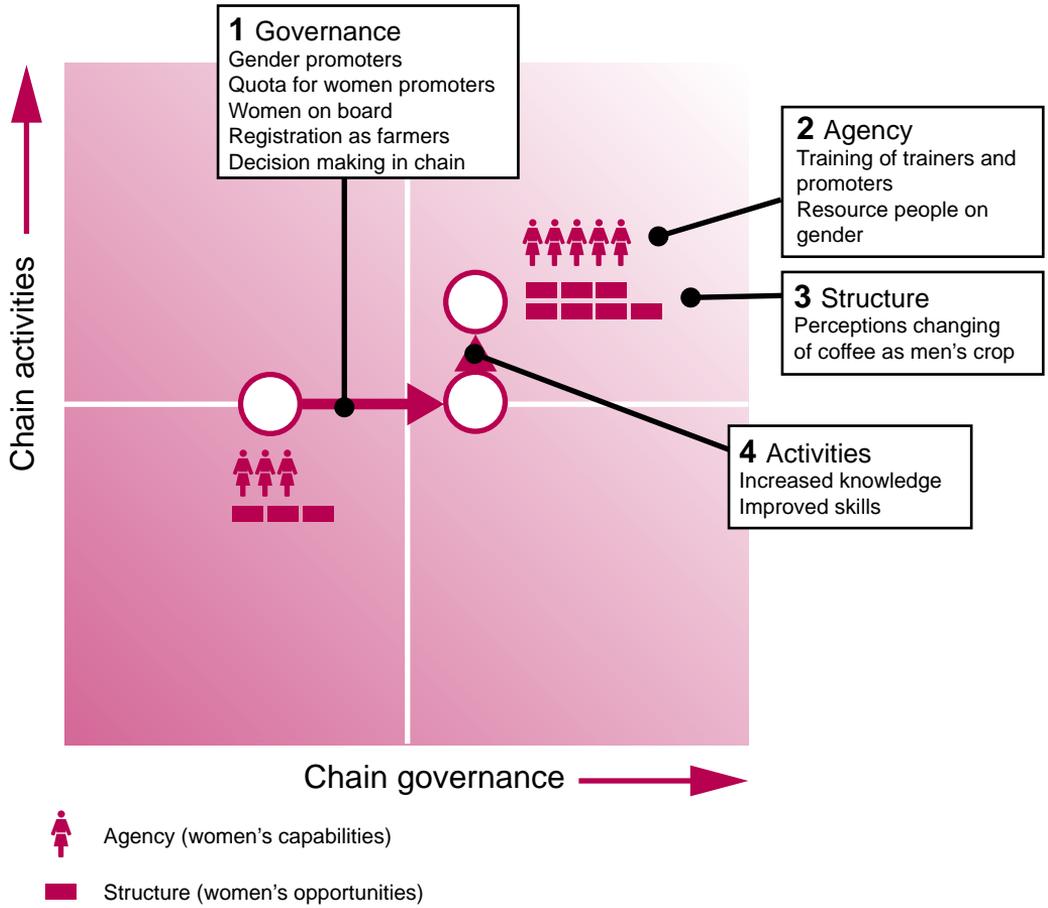


Figure 7.6. Changes in the coffee chain in Kenya

## Using existing standards and certification channels

From the cases clear risks emerge when gender dynamics are not addressed in certified chains. Risks are related to product quality, product quantity and the related financial rewards through quality premiums.

When it comes to quality, women present a weak link. Often women are not well-informed of the standard's requirements, despite their direct work in production of certified crops. This is in part because men tend to participate in training or information meetings on behalf of the family more often than women. But after the meeting or workshop, information is not necessarily passed on to women. Male farmers who attend the trainings about agricultural practices, standards and certification may not always share the details with their wives who work in the field and are supposed to implement what has been communicated by the trainers. For example, in one cooperative 64% of the male farmers knew that their coffee was sold as certified, versus only 34% of women.

For certified production, this presents a serious risk. If women do not understand the requirement or how to put it into practice, they can jeopardize the programme. For example if women do not know the allowable inputs (pesticides, fertilizers), then they may apply them, and the holding may lose its certificate. Where women are a weak link in terms of chain performance, addressing gender is a risk-mitigation strategy, as we saw in the Kenyan coffee case. If women are aware of existing opportunities and requirements, they can be responsible or take advantage of them. Quality improves where gender inequity is addressed.

We also see that volumes can increase when women's involvement in production and ownership of the rewards improves. In many cases women do not get equal share of benefits, are not rewarded for the additional efforts that are required for organic production or are not able or allowed to participate in household, farm-level or producer organization decision making. Women have limited access and control over land and other resources and opportunities. This acts as a disincentive and means that women invest less in complying with the standards. When women do not reap the benefits of their labour, they are less interested in taking care of the crops (we see this in the organic products case in Uganda and Tanzania, and in the Kenya coffee case. When training is directed towards women and they can control the income they earn and other resources, and they are more motivated to invest in the crop.

The cases illustrate the importance of encouraging inclusion of female staff at operational and management levels in all links of the chain. In the Kenyan case, after Fairtrade certification a woman became member of the board, as advised by an auditor. For women it is often easier to work with a female extension officer or promoter farmer, and for men it may be more acceptable for their wives to work with female field staff. Farmers who have been trained in gender can also act as role models for other female farmers. Inclusion of women at all chain activities and support can increase productivity.

So there is a clear chain performance incentive for addressing gender in certified chains. But how can this be done? How can the specifics of certified chains be harnessed to meet gender objectives? We can identify several ways:

- Using the premium from certification to fund gender-related activities
- Using the requirements (structures) of the standards and certification process
- Developing indicators to include in existing standards or use in a complementary way
- Triggering new enterprises for women to support certified production.

### Using the premium to fund gender-related activities

To begin we look at how one project is using the organic premium to fund its gender-awareness programme. Most standards allow a premium price to come to the farmers who sell certified products. Organic and Fairtrade have such premiums. Fairtrade has a higher price, but also an additional amount that goes to the cooperative to be invested through a democratic decision-making process. Box 7.8 describes how one community decided to use that premium to fund gender-awareness programmes.

Box 7.9 shows how one cooperative is capitalizing on the Fairtrade premiums they earn through selling certified coffee, by re-investing them in a gender-awareness programme that has already had significant impact on the community.

### Using the standards and certification infrastructure

We saw in the stories about organic farming in Uganda and Tanzania (Case 7.3) and coffee in Kenya (Case 7.5) that although existing social and environmental standards are not specific on gender, there are ways to piggyback on the charac-

#### Box 7.8. The added value of certification

A community-led project with the Bukonzo Joint Cooperative in Uganda (Case 6.2) had impressive results in terms of stimulating dialogue between men and women about changes they could make to improve their lives. The impact of the project extended to negotiations further along in the chain. For instance, farmers negotiated with exporters in Kampala about prices and other issues. So with all the success, what additional benefits can certification to organic and Fairtrade bring?

Exporters had expressed an interest in buying certified coffee: many had asked the farmers if they were organic or Fairtrade-certified. This sparked an idea for the farmers, who had to figure out how to fund the on-going work on gender equity that was transforming their communities. The farmers see adherence to a standard as an opportunity to win premiums from their coffee sales, which they can invest back into their Gender Action Learning System programme. The Bukonzo cooperative has decided to use these premiums for just that – to keep moving forward with the programme, focusing on gender relations at the household level (see Case 6.2 and Box 10.1). With support from Solidaridad, a Dutch development organization, the cooperative will receive additional funding for a 3-year transition period with a declining amount each year.

*More information: Paineto Baluku, Bukonzo Joint Cooperative Microfinance Society*

### **Box 7.9. Traceability is the same – for organic, Fairtrade or gender**

Café Femenino coffees (Case 7.1) are all certified organic and Fairtrade, which both bring premium prices. Organic certification requires strictly documented audit trails, meaning that it is possible to trace any consignment of coffee back to the farm where it was grown, and verify that it was in fact grown in an organic way. The trail must show who did what and how at each stage in the value chain. This requirement makes it easier for Café Femenino, because the same trail can be used to check who has grown the coffee – a woman or a man.

In most cooperatives the producer is assigned an identification number or code that is specific to the land and the producer. In each of the next steps in the coffee chain – processing and milling before export, the lots of coffee are given new identification numbers for tracking. These identification numbers are also attached to the documentation. At the final processing stage the shipping lot is given a final lot number that is assigned by the International Coffee Organization. From that point until it is purchased by the roaster, the coffee is identified by this lot number.

For certification to the organic standard, each enterprise in the chain must comply and maintain their organic certification: producer, processor, mill, warehouse, importer and roaster. So throughout the value chain there is third-party-verifiable accountability of the coffee itself. The organic coffee chain is key to the validity of the Café Femenino label.

*More information: Gay Smith, Café Femenino, [www.optco.com](http://www.optco.com), [www.cafefemenino.com](http://www.cafefemenino.com)*

teristics and “infrastructure” of certification to progress on gender objectives. The structures that are required for meeting organic and other standards can also be used to address gender. For example, using the audit trail required for organic certification has facilitated women becoming more visible in the coffee chain (Box 7.9): traceability for organic or Fairtrade is no different than traceability of the product for gender.

Another example of using the infrastructure of certification to meet gender objectives is to use a producer group’s internal control system. Most standards now require an internal control system for smallholder producer groups or cooperatives (Box 7.10). Each certified company or cooperative sets up an internal control system, which is used to verify that all farmers comply with the standards. Once the internal control system is in place, it can also be used to facilitate meeting gender objectives or be used to gather gender disaggregated data to better understand the gender dynamics at play.

#### **Internal control systems**

An internal control system is a mechanism for smallholder farmer groups to monitor, guide, protect and sanction members within a producer group who share a common certificate. The cost for group certification, as it is known, is much lower per farmer than individual farm certification, so is a good option for small farms.

All registered organic farmers need to sign a contract with their farmer’s organization to declare their commitment to following the standard. The internal control system compels the farmers to document their practices at the farm level, and for

### Box 7.10. Gendered internal control system

Each certified company or cooperative sets up an internal control system to verify that all farmers comply with the standards. All registered organic farmers need to sign a contract with the organization to declare their commitment. The company employs an internal control system operator who maintains files of all farmers and inspect their farms at least once a year. The internal control system is a requirement for group certification. The external inspector inspects the functioning of this system based on its documentation and farm inspection of a certain percentage of the registered farmers.

The manual for the internal control system can be adapted to integrate gender aspects. The EPOPA programme has done this (Case 7.3). For example in the description of the product it should be indicated if the crop is traditionally grown by men, women or both. In the organizational chart, the gender of each operator should be indicated. The document should describe how female farmers are stimulated to register and take part in training. The organization should make sure that there is no disconnect between who receives the instruction (usually men) and those who do the work (both men and women). The growers list shows the gender of each registered farmer.

This way the gender aspects are automatically taken into account while using a system that has to be developed anyhow. Gender mainstreaming is included from the start in a systematic way, and is checked by the internal inspector.

*More information: Inge Vos, Agro Eco-Louis Bolk Institute*

the producer group to monitor and document individual farmer compliance to the standard. The company or organization employs an internal control system operator, who has the responsibility to maintain files of all farmers and to inspect their farm at least once a year. In this way, the internal control system follows every farmer's progress.

The internal control system is then audited by the certification body, usually on an annual basis, to ensure that the system is working properly. The external inspector inspects the functioning of the internal control system based on its documentation and farm inspection of a certain percentage of the registered farmers. This usually involves spot checks on individual farmers to ensure that what is documented in the system can also be seen in practice.

Through this internal system, a large amount of data is generated, which can be very useful for the farmer group in terms of seeing weak links and bottlenecks, as well as the strengths of its members. It can be used for targeting capacity building efforts, training, and for tailoring farmer support programmes.

The internal control system is strongly linked with the extension system. An efficient extension system should be in place in which all actors have clearly defined roles. Internal control systems can be used also to meet gender objectives. Box 7.10 shows how the EPOPA programme engendered its internal control system to better understand the gender dynamics that hindered or strengthened its activities.

The EPOPA case on organic products (Case 7.3) demonstrated that obtaining gender-disaggregated data is simple to do, and provides clear insights into the

different contributions and benefits of men and women farmers. Engendering the internal control system and internal standards in this way revealed the different positions, constraints, opportunities and benefits available to men and women. These systems were used to collect gender-disaggregated data, sensitize farmers about gender equity, help farmers improve performance, and ensure that women benefited from the scheme. The EPOPA internal auditor played an important role in checking the gender issues that had been added to the system.

When EPOPA added a column on gender to the data-management system used by the organic cooperatives, a new world came to light. Doing so did not actually change the roles that women and men were playing, but it made women visible. The differences between male and female farmers in terms of quality, volume and attendance at trainings became immediately apparent. This intervention was gender-neutral, but the follow-up activities to build female farmers' capacities were gender-specific. This underlines that it is crucial to integrate gender from the very beginning in the design of an intervention so as to maximize its impact and minimize the risk of excluding women. The route EPOPA followed was more complicated as it had not addressed gender from the start.

### **Developing gender indicators and standards**

Because gender is hardly mentioned in existing standards, there is a danger that it will be overlooked. That makes it important to including gender indicators into existing standards. If considering gender is a requirement, it is easier to implement, taken more seriously, and automatically included in preparations for an audit. It then can also be checked by the external auditor. If successful, the producer organization can use compliance to gender standards as a selling point. When including gender in the existing standards we can learn from women's brands and seals, and see how some aspects of these standards, like Con Manos de Mujer (Box 7.11), could fit into other standards.

The Con Manos de Mujer code targets women who manage or own land. It aims to increase the recognition of work done by women in all areas of production, and seeks to improve the welfare of women in terms of work, equal pay, and ensuring rights are protected. Continuous training and access to health care are key. It aims to improve the living conditions of women and their families, promote good agricultural practices and environmental responsibility, and provide farmers with the opportunity to access to new markets and increase their income. The code covers a variety of products, including coffee, cocoa, tea, textiles and handicrafts. By giving an example of what a gender standard can look like, it provides insights into how gender could complement existing social and environmental standards.

It is important to note that all the cooperatives certified by Con Manos de Mujer in agricultural production are also organic. The organic requirements provide the required infrastructure for compliance with the Con Manos de Mujer standard. In this respect, the gender standard and indicators are not standalone. They are instead an example of how gender can be addressed by piggybacking on the infrastructure and requirements of standards already in use.

## Box 7.11. The Con Manos de Mujer standard

### Guiding principles

- Quality production
- Social responsibility
- Environmental responsibility
- Economic responsibility.

### Principle of production quality

To evaluate product quality through the different stages of production. Example:

- Women are trained in technical aspects of harvest and post-harvest coffee handling

### Principle of social responsibility

To ensure that women work in a safe, secure environment. The criteria evaluated are: health and safety, hygiene and cleanliness, worker rights, education, medical assistance, and security. Examples:

- The inspected entity is directly managed by women.
- Information about HIV is provided: women are informed and supported in protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- Pregnant women have special treatment and are not dismissed.

### Principle of environmental responsibility

To promote environmental awareness amongst women involved in the programme, evaluating their efforts to protect and preserve environmental resources (water, biological, forests, etc.). Example:

- Women are trained in aspects of environmental impacts.

### Principle of economic responsibility

To ensure transparency in the supply chain process allowing traceability from the point of origin to the final destination (traceability).

*More information: Case 7.2; Loren Estevez Cuevas, Mayacert.*

In 2009, a workshop on gender equity in certified coffee chains was held in Costa Rica (see [www.ge-cc.org](http://www.ge-cc.org)). Participants brainstormed on developing gender indicators for existing standards programmes. Box 7.12 lists some of their suggestions.

## Triggering new enterprises for women

In some cases, an organic enterprise can trigger new businesses for women, as in Mali (Box 7.13). Here, women started a separate activity connected to organic production, which became crucial part of the pest-management system and provided an alternative income for women. Women supported organic production

## Box 7.12. Developing gender indicators

The following ideas were generated by a group of committed women and men at a workshop on certified coffee chains in Costa Rica 2009.

### Democracy – participation – transparency

- Women must occupy 30% of management positions.
- The statutes of the organization must guarantee these.
- Training programmes on management and leadership are implemented with 50% female participation.
- Elections to management positions must be through a process of anonymous voting, assuring proportional representation of female and male members.
- The organization must create programmes to promote the affiliation of male members' wives, sons and daughters as producers.

### Policies and programmes

- The organization must implement a gender policy that defines work plans, necessary resources and specific functions and responsibilities.
- The gender policy must define guidelines for equal access to services and resources (technical assistance, training, credit) and sensitization programmes against sexual discrimination, sexual harassment and domestic violence.
- The organization must institutionalize or establish survey processes within the members' families, with 50% participation of women in order to formulate proposals for the use of the social premium and the other benefits.
- The organization must demonstrate commitment to the training of female and male partners and employees in gender/masculinity topics, focusing on improving the dialogue and communication within the family.
- The organization must assure work opportunities for the community with priority for women.
- The organization must assure programmes to guarantee appropriate conditions for unpaid housework within the family (traditionally known as domestic work). Examples: access to drinking water, improved kitchens.

### Work conditions

- The organization or company must provide areas for childcare for male and female temporary employees.
- Women must be prohibited from working with chemicals and heavy loads.
- The organization must specifically guarantee health programmes and job security for women.

*More information: Mieke Vanderschaeghe*

### Box 7.13. Making biopesticides for organic cotton: A better fit for women in Mali

Cotton growing in Mali is heavily male-dominated and has a reputation of excluding women. So when a group of development NGOs (SNV, ICCO, KIT) established a company, called Yiriwa, to sell organic cotton, they aimed for at least 25% of the cotton growers to be women.

Much to their surprise, two years into the project the participation of women had fallen from 21% to 13%. Concerned, they studied three villages in southern Mali to find out what had happened. This found that women could own land and farm it, and that they had resources and freedom to grow organic cotton. So what had happened?

Like in many rural situations, women's household responsibilities took a lot of time. That severely limited their capacity to grow organic cotton, which needs a lot of weeding and composting. Plus, women had poor access to agricultural resources, organic fertilizers and credit.

But something else was happening at the same time. A new activity had emerged to support organic cotton production: an exclusively female activity. Women were making biopesticides from *kobi* oil (*Carapa procera*). This was essential for controlling pests, which are a major problem in growing organic cotton. This brought an additional income for the women, who sold about 1,500 litres of the *kobi* biopesticide to organic cotton producers at FCFA 1,500 each. The activity was much more amenable to their other daily work, so women preferred it.

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not by working in the fields, but by supplying inputs. They found a niche that fits better with their other responsibilities (see also Chapter 4).

### Conclusion: When using existing standards is a good strategy

When it comes to reaping the benefits from certification to production standards, the lesson that Oxfam GB learned regarding the **need for a sound export market** before investing is an important one (see the story about honey in Ethiopia, Case 5.2). The cost of certification and getting a production unit ready for an audit is high. Using standards and certification to address gender is effective where export markets are sought and where farmer capacities are either quite high or where an NGO or export company provides extension and training to support compliance. Once it is decided to go for certification, some important considerations for addressing gender must be taken into account. We discuss these below.

**Register women as farmers within the cooperative.** Joint registration (of both men and women) or registering women alone, regardless of who actually owns the land, enables both men and women farmers to get advice and training, and gives them voting rights. The registered farmer receives the income from the certified produce, so this way the women and the whole farm family benefits.

**Develop and use of project and management tools,** such as gender-specific baseline surveys, impact assessments and training guidelines. Such methods raise awareness on the roles men and women play. Focus group discussions are a good methodology to use with farmers. A focus-group session should start with men and women together: it is important that men see it as a joint activ-

ity and understand that they will benefit when women are included. Separate sessions are needed to discuss gender-specific aspects. Make training materials gender-sensitive is vital, as are events that bring women together.

**Include gender from the start.** A gender analysis should be done in a participatory way, so you know all gender aspects from the start of a programme. Planning can be based on this analysis. Ensure that gender-disaggregated data are available throughout the process. Gender should be integrated into monitoring and evaluation. Review meetings evaluate progress and enable further planning on the outcomes (Case 7.3). Gender assessments are best at the start, when developing the management system. Supportive networks make the strategy more effective. This can have a gender-redistributive impact, shifting the power balance over time between men and women farmers.

**Seize opportunities and conducive policies.** In the Rwanda story (Case 7.4) we saw that government policies supported organic value chains and gender. Ikirezi capitalized on those openings and seized opportunities as they arose. Associations were formed to encourage women to take advantage of the abandoned geranium farms and market opportunities for organic essential oils. Farms were expanded and business diversified because women took up these opportunities.

Using existing standards and certification processes to address gender is a good strategy when you can make use of supportive government policies. The effect of such policies in Rwanda has led to startling levels of female participation in politics: women make up 56.3% of the Chamber of Deputies, 38.7% of village executive committees, 43.9% of the “cell consultative committees”, and 45.1% of the “sector consultative committees”, according to the *New Times*, a Rwandan newspaper, on 6 June 2012).

The interventions in this subchapter vary from gender neutral (like adding a column for gender in a producer organization’s internal control database), to gender-specific (such as quotas for women’s participation in cooperatives), to gender-redistributive.

### Situating the arguments

In most cases, improved market quantity or quality was a result of addressing gender. For example, in the story on organic products in Uganda and Tanzania (Case 7.3) omitting women weakened the system. Collecting gender-disaggregated data (and acting on the findings) are essential for **good business**. Addressing gender improved the business and resulted in better quality and better understanding by women farmers of what was required to meet the standard.



Using standards, certification and labels to improve gender equity draws from all three of the main arguments articulated in Chapter 2.2: **social justice**, **poverty reduction** and **business rationales**.

## 7.3 Conclusions

Using standards and certification to address gender employs a mix of interventions with different kinds of gender impact. Developing a gender standard and indicators that ensure women's participation are gender-specific and gender-redistributive interventions. For example, Con Manos de Mujer (Case 7.2) insists that women be the owners or managers of the land where certified coffee is produced. This is a gender-redistributive strategy as it ensures that women own land, which few previously did. Other interventions, like the collection of gender-disaggregated data as we saw in the organic products story in Uganda and Tanzania (Case 7.3), are gender-neutral. There is no immediate impact on gender dynamics. However, the data can reveal all kinds of information for improving chain performance by addressing the outcome of inequity more fully.

A mutually beneficial and iterative relationship between standards and certification on one hand and gender issues on the other is beginning to materialize. This relationship is two-pronged: improving gender dynamics improves chain performance; and certification offers specific mechanisms that facilitate addressing gender.

### ***Business: Using gender to improve chain performance***

We can be quickly convinced of the value of addressing gender from a purely instrumental angle: in order to improve chain performance (as with coffee in Kenya (Case 7.5) and organic products in Uganda and Tanzania (Case 7.3)). But gender-blindness in certified chains also entails risks. If women are marginalized or do not enjoy the benefits such as higher income, then they may not bother to make the additional effort required for certification. They may not be inspired to comply. That in turn endangers the success of the certified chain.

Training and access to information are critical for both men and women. When women put what they have learned into practice, product quality and quantity go up. The women also come to feel they own the certified produce, further boosting quality and volumes. If gender-disaggregated data show that cultural or other structural barriers prevent women from improving their output, it makes sense to address gender issues in order to improve chain performance.

### ***Social justice: Using standards and certification to improve gender equity***

The cases in this chapter illustrate how standards and certification can be used to improve the gender situation. There are many benefits of doing so from the social justice point of view. One is that decision-making at household and community levels improves as whole families help decide things that affect their lives. Certification can bring women increased income, as well as control over that income. Women-only products build their capacities, confidence and self-esteem.

**Table 7.1. Comparing changes across cases**

Case	Stimulus for change	Change vis-à-vis gender	Change vis-à-vis business
<b>Café Femenino, Peru</b> Case 7.1	Women producers and buyer	Producers; community women in South and North; buyers (change of position of women in the company)	Product quality improved at producer level  Buyers (women's coffee)
<b>Con Manos de Mujer, Guatemala</b> Case 7.2	Standard setter	Producers (income), societal norms that women can own land (institutional change) household level, consumers	Better quality product
<b>Organic products, Uganda and Tanzania</b> Case 7.3	NGO (EPOPA programme) and donor (Sida)	Producers (higher income, income used by women too); service providers (employed by exporters); EPOPA staff	Better quality product
<b>Essential oils, Rwanda</b> Case 7.4	Government policy  Market opportunities	Women as farmers and processors  Women's forums at different levels	Change in societal context – tribal reconciliation as precondition for doing business
<b>Coffee, Kenya</b> Case 7.5	Quarterly review programme with stakeholders; auditor for Fairtrade	Producers – more women participating at more levels: as promoter farmers, in mills, in the cooperative, as service providers and buyers	Higher quantity of coffee  Market opportunities

### **Poverty alleviation: Using gender and certification to rebuild livelihoods**

Complying with a standard brings a price premium, and that can boost producers' incomes. In the Café Femenino and Con Manos de Mujer cases, the income and well-being of women were central to both initiatives. Branding honey as produced by women (as well as organic and Fairtrade) boosted the Ethiopian women's income. And in Rwanda, gender was a vital focus of a post-conflict reconstruction effort centring on essential oils.

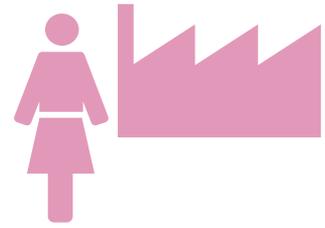
Table 7.1 summarizes the changes that occurred in the five cases in Chapter 7. The stimulus for change varied widely between the cases: from the producers themselves, to buyers, donors, the standard-setter (Con Manos de Mujer), consumers, market opportunities and government policy. This is an empowering notion: regardless of your location in the chain, there are opportunities to progress on gender and promote gender equity through the openings created by standards and certification.

This chapter has addressed issues that affect much of the chain, including actors further along the chain, or those who support the chain (standard-setters, service providers, NGOs, government policymakers, etc.). Chapter 8 looks more at the role of a lead firm in building and supporting gender-responsible business. It builds on many ideas in Chapter 7 as it delves into corporate social responsibility policies and explores the concept of “shared value”.



# 8

## Gender-responsible business



*Main contributors: Noortje Verhart, Anna Laven, Harold Lema and Carolina Jara*

In the previous chapters we addressed gender equity in agricultural value chains with a focus on primary production, services and standards. This chapter focuses on companies further along the value chain that integrate gender into their corporate strategy.

Companies can play a role in addressing gender inequality and improve the position of women in the agricultural value chains they are part of. This section looks at different approaches to corporate social responsibility.



*Figure 8.1. Gender-responsible business focuses on the lead firm in the chain*

## 8.1 Corporate social responsibility and shared value

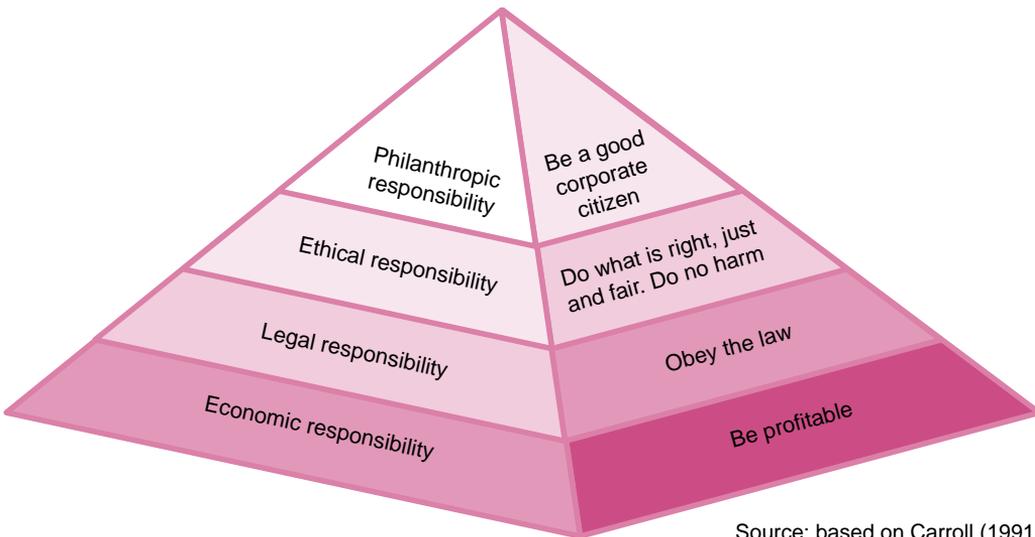
### Corporate social responsibility

Corporate social responsibility is where “companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interactions with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis” (European Commission 2001). This notion emphasizes the voluntary obligation of companies to society (Jones 1980).

Over the last decade, a trend towards ethical business behaviour has gained support from business and international organizations. In the business community, there is a growing awareness that things should change, not only for those that need protection, but also in the interest of business itself. Several initiatives provide guidelines, standards and certification on various aspects of corporate social responsibility (Box 8.1).

Companies see corporate social responsibility in different ways. We can distinguish four types of responsibilities (Figure 8.2): economic responsibility (be profitable), legal responsibility (obey the law), ethical responsibility (do what is right, just and fair) and philanthropic responsibility (be a good corporate citizen) (Carroll 1991, Apotheker 2009).

Some companies regard corporate social responsibility as a way to enhance their reputations or to reduce the risk of damaging exposés. Others see it as a way of ensuring their activities are ethical: the idea of “do no harm”. Many companies see it as an extra task rather than as an integrated part of their overall strategy. That puts societal issues at the periphery of their business, not at the core. Although businesses have implemented many successful initiatives, a lot of companies lack



Source: based on Carroll (1991)

Figure 8.2. The corporate social responsibility pyramid

## Box 8.1. International frameworks for corporate social responsibility and gender

### Frameworks that make gender explicit

**Gender equity seal.** A seal or certificate awarded to private firms. Seals are granted through an independent evaluation that assesses a company's achievement of specific standards related to gender equity, including recruitment, career advancement, training and reducing sexual harassment. So far companies in Mexico, Egypt and South American countries have obtained the seal (UN Summit 2010).

<http://tinyurl.com/c73hugk>

**Global Reporting Initiative.** This has developed a framework for organizations to report on their sustainability work in economics, environment and social issues. Its gender practitioner's guide shows how to mainstream gender into such sustainability reports. This guide focuses on how a company can report on activities in its supply chain, the company itself (including organizational governance and values), surrounding communities, consumers and investments.

[www.globalreporting.org](http://www.globalreporting.org). Practitioner's guide: <http://tinyurl.com/c4ffng4>

**UNIFEM's women's empowerment principles.** Seven principles of how gender can be mainstreamed by a company on different levels. Companies can sign up to these principles and need to show how they address these. The principles are:

- Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
- Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination.
- Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
- Promote education, training and professional development for women.
- Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
- Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
- Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

<http://tinyurl.com/d9oae5>

### Other relevant frameworks

**ISO 26000.** International standard on social responsibility. This standard provides guidance on social responsibility for private and public sector organizations of all types based on international consensus among expert representatives of the main stakeholder groups, encouraging the implementation of best practice in social responsibility worldwide.

<http://tinyurl.com/dy9bnt3>

**Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development guidelines for multinational enterprises.** The OECD guidelines encourage enterprises to co-operate with governments in the development and implementation of policies and laws. Breaking down barriers to gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship would create new sources of economic growth and help make better use of everyone's skills.

<http://tinyurl.com/d7yfyxk>. OECD's work on gender in different areas: [www.oecd.org/site/elsgender/](http://www.oecd.org/site/elsgender/)

Continued...

### Box 8.1 (cont. )

**European Union Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Corporate Social Responsibility.** This aims to promote innovation, transparency and convergence of corporate social responsibility practices and instruments.

<http://tinyurl.com/lytosb>

**United Nations Global Compact.** A strategic policy initiative for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

[www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)

Corporate social responsibility has developed into a global strategy that aims to guide the ethics and values of many companies. However, according to Kolstad (2006), it is in many cases simply viewed as an instrument to increase profitability, rather than a fundamental goal in itself. He argues that profit maximization cannot be a fundamental principle of any reasonable ethical theory. Therefore, using corporate social responsibility to maximize profits is not ethically defensible. Only when a company pursues ends that are more important from a social point of view can it be considered socially responsible. "When corporate executives only implement acts of corporate responsibility that promote profits, they are just being profit minded, not socially responsible" (Kolstad 2006: 6).

a true understanding of how to do so. The result: ineffective and counterproductive strategies and wasted effort.

There are many approaches towards corporate social responsibility and ways to implement them. Their impact also varies. Gender is on the agenda, along with attempts to bring a human perspective into corporate social responsibility. But radical shifts in approaches, such as those suggested by Kolstad, are rare.

### Shared value

Porter and Kramer (2011) introduce the idea of **shared value**, which goes beyond the economic value of corporate social responsibility. This reflects how creating value for business can go hand-in-hand with creating value for society. "Shared value is not social responsibility, philanthropy, or even sustainability, but a new way to achieve economic success" (Porter and Kramer 2011). Companies are normally assessed on their short-term financial performance: the value of their shares, their growth in productivity, innovativeness, profits, and so on. But this is narrow-minded, say Porter and Kramer: it overlooks important customer needs and the broader influences that determine companies' long-term success.

The Dutch gender platform WO=MEN has looked at challenges of existing approaches and suggests ways to address gender issues in current business practices (Box 8.2).

This chapter presents two cases of companies that have integrated gender into their business strategies. The cases illustrate how gender can be dealt with in an incremental way. The companies learned during the process. Gender was inten-

## Box 8.2. WO=MEN: Changing the rules to make business socially responsible

WO=MEN is a Dutch gender platform in which individual experts, development organizations and research institutes collaborate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands to lobby for and work on gender justice worldwide.

WO=MEN believes that the entry point for business is through corporate social responsibility in value chains. Lasting social and environmental impact can be achieved only if companies no longer export harmful practices to more vulnerable actors in the chain. Business must take a conscious step to understand activities in the chain and set ambitious standards beyond what is conventional; for instance, by shifting from “naming and shaming” to “knowing and showing”, and building transparency in the chain.

Many corporate social responsibility frameworks do not “mainstream” gender: they merely mention non-discrimination. Others, like the Global Reporting Initiative, are too complicated and unsuitable for smaller companies. In addition, most codes of conduct focus only on parts of the chain and exclude for example, the informal sector and small-scale producers. This can lead to undesired impacts especially on women, who often are small-scale producers and work in the informal sector.

A coherent perspective on healthy value chain development should include pro-poor services and have clear strategies to reduce inequalities. The enormous need of people at the bottom of the social pyramid therefore signals a missed opportunity. It is unfortunate that corporate social responsibility is often seen as an obligation and costly, rather than as the natural thing to do in business.

There is a need for platforms in which different actors such as business leaders, gender experts and NGOs come together to set a new agenda. It is time to change the rules!

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tionally (but also unintentionally) put on their agenda and proved beneficial for the company and the value chain.

The cases illustrate different strategies, applied in different circumstances, and with different impacts on gender relations in value chains. But the outcomes were similar: improved business practices and at the same time better positioning of women in parts of the value chain, economically as well as socially (Box 8.3).

The two cases are:

- **Case 8.1, *Allanblackia* nuts in Tanzania:** Unilever, a multinational firm, has developed a new value chain to explore and promote a new market for *Allanblackia* seeds. Unilever created the demand for the seeds, while Faida MaLi, a non-profit organization, set the terms for cooperative membership, which enabled women to become part of the value chain.
- **Case 8.2, Fostering a socially responsible business: Cynara Peru,** describes a medium-sized company that produces artichokes. Cynara has incorporated gender equality into its corporate agenda, from production through to management.

### Box 8.3. Corporate social responsibility and shared value

**Entry point.** The strongest resource of a company is its people. Investing in equal opportunities for women and men contributes to business and society.

**Why do it?** Gender equity can contribute to an innovative and transparent business operation in a company, and to equal opportunities for men and women (also in top positions). That in turn leads to higher and more efficient production and profits for a company (McKinsey 2010). It can also be used as a strategy to increase the profile of the company.

**How to do it?** Based on the cases, we can identify at least two ways to make gender equity part of a company's business as usual:

- Through a partnership between public and private actors, looking for shared values and complementarity in expertise.
- By integrating gender into a company's core business principles at different levels, with a strong role for senior management.
- Learning by doing.

**When is it a good strategy?** The strategy seems particularly useful when:

- Company leaders are committed.
- The company or its main partners are located close to the actors in the supply chain.
- The company takes into account consumer priorities and concerns.
- It is possible to find the right partners to implement the approach.

#### Conditions for success

- Clear monitoring and control mechanisms are in place to measure achievements.
- Awareness of gender issues is in place, as well as knowledge on how gender equity contributes to both corporate and societal goals.

## Case 8.1 Allanblackia seeds in Muheza, Tanzania

*Harold Lema*

*Allanblackia*, an evergreen tree that bears long, yellow fruit, grows in the forests of Muheza, a coastal district in eastern Tanzania.<sup>1</sup> Local people used not to think very much about it. They would take the nut-like seeds out of the ripe fruits, and press them to make cooking oil and soap. But the *Allanblackia* trees had no other value. Farmers cut many of them down for timber or firewood. Few are now left in the farmland, and the two species of *Allanblackia* that grow in Tanzania are both on the threatened species list.

But *Allanblackia* is valuable: the seeds are high in stearic acid, which is used in soaps (as the people of Muheza already knew), cosmetics, sweets, and many other items. Unilever, a multinational company, has started buying *Allanblackia* seeds in Tanzania and in other countries across Africa. Demand is high, and supplies cannot keep up. Unilever has supported the establishment of Novella Development Tanzania Limited, a public-private initiative, to mobilize and sustain the *Allanblackia* seeds supply. The seeds are collected and sold in the off-season, when farmers have few other sources of income.

Women in Muheza work with their husbands on the family farm, but as many other places, they do not own the land, and it is the men who sell the harvest and decide how the money should be spent. *Allanblackia* is a welcome source of independent income for the women: they can collect the seeds in the forest, so do not need to ask anyone's permission.

### Organizing production

Novella and Unilever buy the seeds and manage the process from the collection point, oil processing and transportation to the end market in Europe. But how to organize the collection and marketing? In 2003, Unilever contracted Faida Market Linkage Company Limited (Faida MaLi) to do this. Faida MaLi is a non-profit organization that links small-scale farmers with markets. Faida MaLi facilitates the process from production until the collection centres, where the producer groups sell the seeds. It organizes the farmers into groups and trains them on business skills, contract farming, price negotiation and production.

Unilever, Novella, Faida MaLi and Cordaid/Hivos (which fund part of the initiative) have signed a memorandum of understanding that outlines their roles and responsibilities in the chain. This specifies that gender, child labour and environmental aspects be considered as part of the project.

<sup>1</sup> More information: <http://tinyurl.com/cukp33s>

The approach aims to ensure equal outcomes for men and women. At least half the participants in training must be women. Women are included in contract negotiations where high-level decisions are made. In producers' organizations, women must make up at least 40% of the members and 42% of the board. That ensures that women now jointly negotiate prices, identify the location of seed-collection centres, and oversee quality control.

The task of the organizations' leaders is to manage the collection centres, control seed quality, and manage cash payments to farmers on behalf of Novella. Clerks inspect seeds quality, weigh the sacks of seed, keep records and pay farmers accordingly. Most of the clerks and farmers' leaders at the centres are women.

With better negotiation skills, the producer groups can negotiate better prices. The price of *Allanblackia* has increased by 400% from TSh 60 (five US cents) a kilogram in 2004 to TSh 300 (\$0.24) in 2010. Farmers in Muheza have collected and sold over 1,500 tons of seeds valued at \$228,000. Women have earned 46% of this total.

There are now 60 producer groups with over 3,000 farmers; 43% of their members are women. The proportion of women started out at 53% but has sunk gradually as men realized that collecting *Allanblackia* was an attractive enterprise. Because of the requirement women must make up at least 40% of the group members, they are still well represented.

The *Allanblackia* value chain has created over 200 jobs for local men and women: clerks, transporters, staff of the seed-crushing factory, and labourers to load and unload the seeds. Some 38% of these positions are filled by women.

### Challenges and opportunities

Collecting seed from the wild cannot supply the high demand for the seed. So Faida MaLi has started a programme to plant trees. Nurseries have been established, and producer organizations have started planting seedling in their farms.

*Allanblackia* is an attractive business for men as well as women. There is a risk of losing the gains made in female empowerment. Faida MaLi is training farmers, especially women, to lobby at various levels and ensure they benefit from the *Allanblackia* income in the future. Novella and Unilever are also planning to develop criteria to ensure both women and men have equal access to income from the seeds.

The value chain is driven by profit and market demand. There is a risk of losing the focus on gender in order to sustain demand and supply. That means Faida MaLi, Novella and Unilever must jointly monitor the situation to maintain and improve women's status in the chain.

### Analysing the change

According to Faida MaLi, change started with building women's capacity to become involved in a new chain. Quotas for women's participation helped them take up leadership positions. But the issue of land-entitlement did not change:

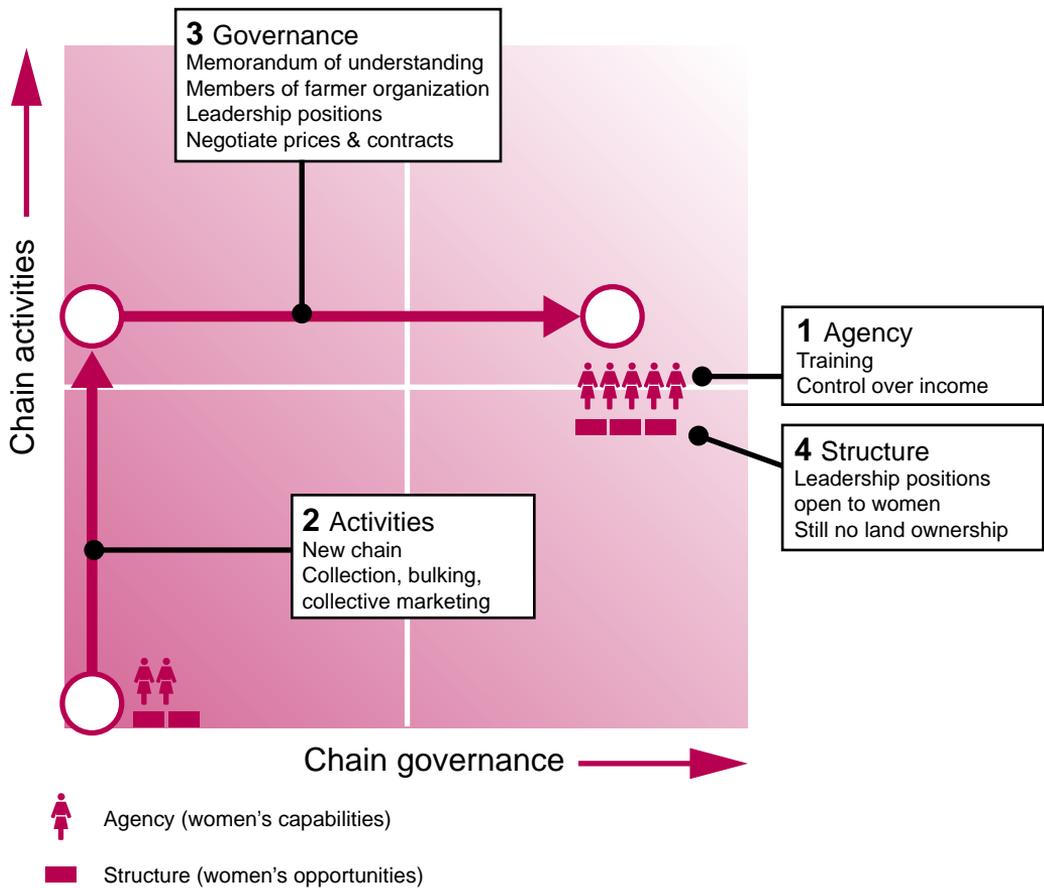


Figure 8.3. Changes in the Allanblackia chain in Tanzania

women often do not own land. This means that despite their benefits from *Allanblackia* nuts, women remain vulnerable for men taking over. They still depend on organizations like Faida MaLi to ensure future benefits for women.

There were relatively big changes in chain governance and chain activities, but smaller changes in agency and structure. Setting quotas for women in cooperatives helped to ensure a sustainable supply of *Allanblackia* nuts. At the same time it helped to make *Allanblackia* an attractive business for both men and women. The commercialization of *Allanblackia*, originally a women's crop, has not led to the exclusion of women because of that. Together with men, women have also been able to gain. But without quotas, women may lose their position in the cooperative. Therefore further changes in women's capabilities and access and control over resources are needed to guarantee their benefits.

## Case 8.2 Fostering a socially responsible business: Cynara Peru

*Carolina Jara*

“The first thought about training the staff was on food safety,” says Carolina Jara, managing director of Cynara Peru. “We produce artichokes for the export market, and so hygiene is very important. But when the staff came to the training session, the men and the women sat way apart from each other – as if they had some infectious disease!

“That was when we realized that relations between men and women employees might be a problem. We need strong teams that can work together. But they didn’t talk to each other. Some jobs were men’s jobs, and some were women’s jobs.”

### **Cynara Peru**

Cynara Peru produces natural and marinated artichokes in cans and jars. It supplies these to its parent company, a multinational which sells the produce in Europe and the United States. Based in Cerro Alegre, a small village in the Cañete Valley, about 150 km south of Lima in coastal Peru, Cynara Peru rents land from local farmers and employs workers to grow artichokes, which it processes in its factory. The work is highly seasonal: at the peak, the company employs about 100 field workers and another 300 in the factory.

The company started operations in 2009, when it rented 50 ha of land to grow artichokes. It has grown rapidly: in 2010 it planted 130 ha, and in 2011 plans to plant 250 ha.

In this area of Peru, men do much of the heavy work, as well as traditional male tasks such as maintenance and painting, while women do things like cleaning and working on the factory production line. “Some jobs are new,” says Carolina, “so these distinctions don’t yet exist. We try to show that both men and women are capable of doing them. Talent stands over gender.”

The daily routine in the factory can be tiring, so the company encourages its staff to swap tasks every now and then to make their work easier, without compromising productivity. It forms mixed teams of men and women, who can share jobs. As a result, there is a good working environment, and men and women can develop careers based on their skills and preferences.

### **A focus on gender and leadership**

Self-esteem is another problem. Although the company hired experienced staff who understood how a factory operates, it was difficult to find people to act as team leaders. “These people had never had a chance to assume responsibility,”

says Carolina. “They had the thought that their opinions did not count, and would ask, why bother?”

That was why Cynara decided to focus on gender equity and leadership. “We needed people, men or women, who could manage teams, run day-to-day operations, and avoid problems. We needed to be an efficient company. We had a solid argument: create a strong team of professionals where both men and women have equal opportunities.”

### Box 8.4. Carolina Jara: A socially responsible manager in Peru



Born and raised in Spain but with Peruvian heritage, Carolina visited Peru only occasionally: once as a child, and later to explore her roots at the age of 21. But she did not stay. She went back to Spain and worked for various companies. “At some point”, she says, “you have to reflect on your ambitions in life and rethink your strategies.”

Carolina became the general manager of Cynara Peru in 2008. When she was offered the position, she readily took it as a challenge and an opportunity.

Her first action was to develop a corporate policy on social responsibility.

“We developed a policy that would strengthen the business, yes, but the social component would drive how we do business. What makes us unique is that our company considers its human resources as most valuable in practice. How we take care of our employees reflects on our measure of achievement. Complete responsibility means people must act responsibly, be good and do good wherever they are. If we do the right things at home, why shouldn't we do the same at work?”

As a result, a company not only strives for a quality product, but also for quality among its human resources.

During the management's work with the company employees, gender issues started to come up. As a result, Carolina organized a team of responsible and motivated people to look at gender equality in the company. Currently she works with an organization that identifies and addresses specific gender issues.

The efforts have paid off. In the two-and-a-half years since Carolina joined the firm, productivity has grown considerably, and a good working environment has been created. The employees' attitudes have changed: now they feel they belong to the company, and they do their best. An international food standards body has awarded the company high-level certification for two years in a row. Carolina has laid the foundation for a socially driven corporate culture which ensures the company continues to grow.

Carolina was even appointed president of a football team organized by workers. “I cannot fail them – I am proud of them,” she jokes.

“Change demands that management is committed to create a critical mass, often with a small group of people within the company who share in your vision. This is what worked for us. I organized a team of responsible and motivated people to look at gender equality in the company. It does not require huge investments. The real success is embedded in the simplicity and the willingness to start!”

*More information: Carolina Jara, Cynara Peru*

## Finding leaders

At first, no-one wanted to be selected as a leader. So the management asked one of the most skilled and experienced staff, Jonhita, and appointed her head of personnel. She knew all the workers, who are mainly women. Also, she knew about their personal situation as well as their individual skills.

But how could a woman take on this job? Jonhita was not used to giving orders, and she had to cope with criticism from the workers that she used to work with on the same level. The management helped her and supported the decisions she made as a manager, which gave her confidence and credibility among the workers.

Another woman has now been appointed as deputy head of personnel in the facility. Other employees are no longer afraid to take on more or new responsibilities. "Instead, everyone now feels ownership over what they do and are working together towards a similar goal: improving the company," says Carolina. "The workers both male and female feel they have a voice that is heard by their colleagues and by the management. They have gained self-esteem and act as an example for others. They identify problems and suggest solutions towards improving efficiency."

"Gina is another example. She has worked in the fields all her life. We saw she could teach the other women and men what to do, so we made her a supervisor. The results are outstanding. More than once Gina has directed the tractor driver and continues to lead by example. She told us that there was one man who was very difficult to work with in her team. She said she dealt with this issue with patience and a lot of love."



### Doing the right thing

The company's actions have raised eyebrows several times, says Carolina. "We installed restrooms with hot water for the workers. The plumbing contractor was surprised: workers in Peru don't normally get such 'luxury' treatment."

Pregnant women and the many single mothers among the 130 women employees have flexible working hours and work in teams. That lets them change their shifts when they need time off.

### A balanced management team

Cynara's management team leads by example. It has a mix of women and men: Carolina, the general manager, is a woman (Box 8.4), as are two of the four departmental managers. At the next level down, women are well represented in the factory, administration and field departments. Only one department, maintenance, is composed entirely of men.

The administration manager, a woman, has three people under her. One is a man. The surprise was to see that there are men who can do as good a job in the office as women.

### Serving the community

Cynara's corporate social responsibility programme is not confined to the fields and the factory. Located in a small village, the company is part of the community. The manager herself lives in the village. She says the company tries to help local people where it can. For example, the village water tower needed repairs, so Cynara provided materials.

The village and factory are located in a former hacienda – an estate of over 1,000 ha that the government reallocated to local people as part of a land reallocation programme. The government created a cooperative to manage the land, but a corrupt manager sold the land to a rich outsider without knowledge of the farmers. The resulting disputes over ownership make it difficult for residents to demand services from the government.

"As a responsible company, we do what we can," says Carolina. "But Cynara is a private company. We produce artichokes. We are not specialists in land ownership. The solution is to team up with an NGO that specializes in such issues. This is the next dimension of Cynara's corporate social responsibility programme. This programme evolves step by step, as long as we see a win-win, we are happy."

"In life there are things that have to be done – we as leaders get to do it. This is our chance."

### Analysing the change

Change in Cynara started with changing the company's internal organization (**structure**). That enabled women to become managers in the factory and gave them power to make decisions (**governance, activities**). For the first time, women

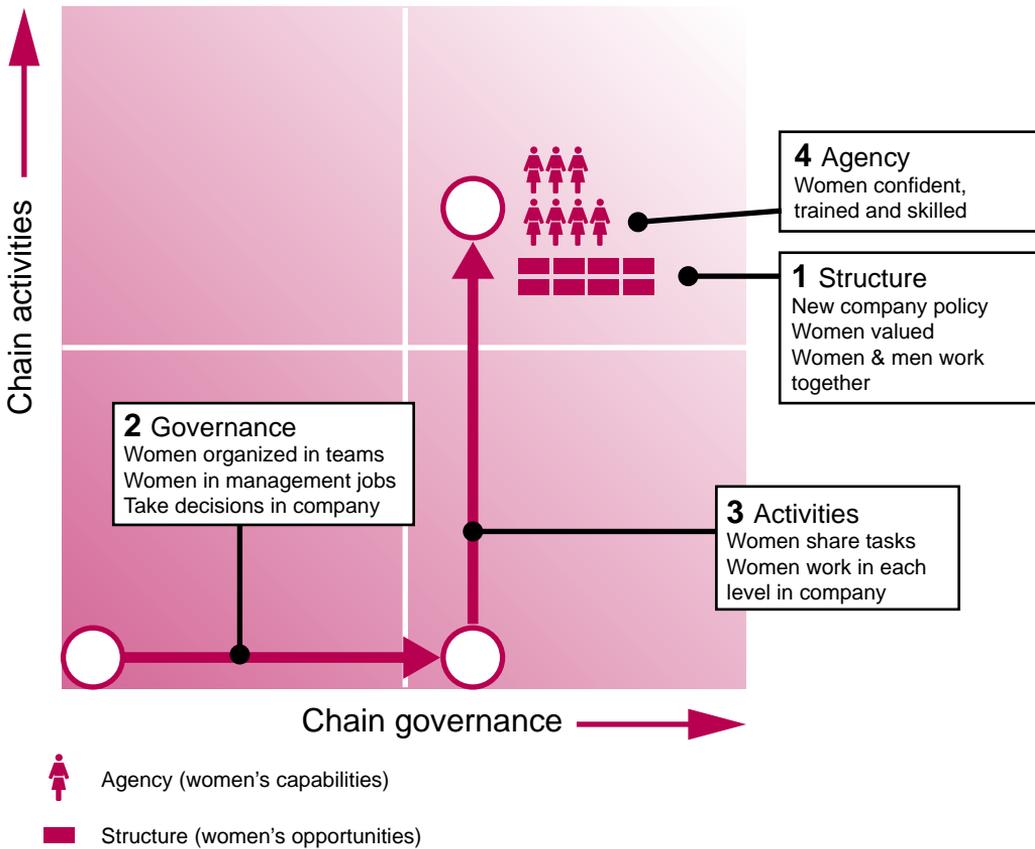


Figure 8.4. Changes in the artichoke chain in Peru

were valued for their talent and given opportunity to develop their skills further (**agency**). That gave them confidence and improved the whole business operations.

The company changed its policies with a new director. This has resulted in changes in the organization, the way employees are organized, their career options and how both women and men value themselves. Enabling women to do on traditional tasks and to allow them to fulfil positions with responsibility, has been empowering, improved their working conditions, but also helped the business to do better.

## 8.2 Becoming a better business for women

Although very different, the two cases show how gender became integrated in corporate strategies. It shows the process from argument to reality.

In the Tanzania case, Unilever was interested mainly in increasing the supply of *Allanblackia* seeds to meet demand. The main potential suppliers of the seeds were women, but they needed support to avoid getting excluded from the chain. At first, Unilever put little effort into developing the social aspects of the chain. But throughout, it made sure that both women and men could benefit from the new crop. It integrated gender into its policy, along with other concerns (child labour and environmental problems) that consumers see as a priority.

Cynara Peru has two main types of employees: farm workers and factory workers in its artichoke-processing plant. The case mainly concerns the latter. Cynara started developing a social responsibility strategy to improve its business operations and increase its efficiency. It discovered that men and women did different types of work and hardly ever worked together. The company recognized that employing skilled women at various levels in the factory and the management would improve its business operations. That led to changes in its human resources operations and planning. Taking the personal situations and needs of individual workers into account allowed women more flexibility in choosing their working hours. Cynara also realized that an efficient business is one where people work together and know what others are doing. It began to mix the groups, desegregate jobs and encourage women to take on new responsibilities.

### *Key interventions*

This chapter has given examples of win–win situations where companies further along the value chain have integrated gender into their business strategies. We have looked at two different interventions:

- A **public-private partnership** in Tanzania looking for shared values and complementarity in expertise.
- A company in Peru that has integrated gender into its **core business principles** at different levels, with a strong role for senior management in trying out how this can work.

### *Building public–private partnerships*

Such partnerships support, or may be a prerequisite for, creating value for both business and society. The Tanzania case illustrates how public and private partners play complementary roles and ensure that the partners are accountable. Unilever took a step-by-step approach. It increasingly integrated social aims in developing the value chain through its partnership with Faida MaLi. Faida MaLi

already had a gender policy, and was able to organize the newly established producer groups in such a way that both women and men could participate. On top of that, the donors that supported Faida MaLi (Hivos and Cordaid) also emphasized the need for gender equality in farmer groups and for benefits to go to both women and men.

This commitment from multiple partners to address gender in the value chain turned out to be essential to implement their paper commitments. The partners worked together through a memorandum of understanding: that meant that they held each other accountable for gender aspects as well as in their overall roles and responsibilities. Faida MaLi's main strategy to address gender was to set minimum standards for women's participation in farmer groups and leadership positions. This was necessary to avoid men gradually taking over a lucrative activity.

Tackling gender issues is not always easy. There is no blueprint. But putting gender higher on the corporate agenda would be easier if the benefits for the company were obvious. That means making the benefits of involving women visible and known to the company. NGOs and government can play an important role in this.

### ***Integrating gender into core business principles***

*"What is good for women in your business is good for your business."*

That may be true, but many senior managers do not always believe it. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence that companies that strive towards equal representation of men and women in top positions can benefit in various ways: they can be more innovative, more transparent in terms of recruitment, offer better opportunities for career development, and retain talented staff longer (e.g., Catalyst 2004, Women to the Top 2001, Mayoux 2010). The Cynara Peru case shows that knowing the needs and preferences of female employees and making better use of their skills helps create a more productive working environment.

Cynara Peru integrated gender into its core business principles. That arose from the desire to make the most of the workers' talents: a predominantly female labour force automatically meant a focus on gender. That in turn led the company to ensure that women were represented at different levels in the supply chain and the company. The result was a win-win situation for both employees and employers, and therefore for the business as a whole and its relationship with the surrounding community.

## Lessons

### Ensure commitment from senior management

It is not enough merely to have a gender strategy. There has to be high-level commitment to it within the company. The profile of Carolina Jara, the general manager of Cynara (Box 8.4), illustrates this. Such commitment should not be limited to a single manager. What if that person leaves? And how about sustainability? How to ensure that women continue to benefit?

In the *Allanblackia* case, we see how things can change from bottom up. The situation in the field led a big multinational to change its approach. The main change came from the collaboration with an NGO which put gender as an important part of its business strategy. Senior commitment is an important issue to ensure that progress is not lost. The producers are now planting *Allanblackia* seedlings on farmland rather than in the forest. But in this part of Tanzania farmland customarily belongs to men. That casts doubt on the sustainability of women's involvement in the value chain.

### Be close to your suppliers

The closer a company is to its supply chain, the easier it is to implement the strategy. For Cynara Peru, being a local company made it possible to work on both supply and processing. For Unilever, the value chain is more complex and the company is a long way from the producers. Here, local partners, Novella and Faida MaLi, supported the business. Unilever and Novella developed and invested in the chain from the collection point up to the consumer, while Faida MaLi ensured that producers and the market were successfully linked.

### Prioritize consumer concerns

A company's gender strategy works better when it takes into account consumer priorities and concerns, and when it identifies the right partners. Unilever's corporate social responsibility policy covered child labour and environmental issues as well as gender. The partnerships it established along the way led to a further commitment towards gender, as this was an important issue for Unilever too. All partners were able to hold each other accountable in implementing the corporate social responsibility policy. That strengthened the outcome.

Cynara Peru's initial social responsibility strategy focused on food safety, not gender. But gender became a natural focus. The company now works with gender experts to further develop its approach.

### Put a monitoring and control mechanism in place

Working with partners on issues that are not necessarily the company's core business requires a clear monitoring and control mechanism. Such a mechanism can derive from a clear idea of what the strategy should and can do. Cynara was able to visualize its goals related to gender and social responsibility, making it

easy to monitor whether it was achieving them. For Unilever this will take more time because it is such a big company. But developing clear goals and integrating them into the core business is an essential step.

### Raise awareness through the chain, including the company

It takes time for a company to become socially responsible, consider gender equity as a guiding principle, and to integrate this into its core business strategy. This is an evolutionary process that relies on building awareness at all levels in the value chain, including within the company itself.

### Conclusions

This chapter shows that profit, productivity, innovation and gender can go together. This corresponds with the concept of **shared value**. But for many companies the idea of shared value is still a bridge too far. They have not yet seen that what is good for society is good for business (instead of the other way around). Many companies with a corporate social responsibility policy respond primarily to internal pressure (from people within the company or its shareholders) and external pressure (e.g., the threat of consumers' boycotts). They may fear a loss of reputation, or see social responsibility as a marketing tool.

How to ensure that being socially responsible is not just an additional task for a company, but rather an integrated part of the overall company's strategy? It starts by assessing a business not only on the basis of its profits, but also in terms of its social performance and achievements. That improves its impact on surrounding communities and the lives of women in particular.

Platforms like WO=MEN (Box 8.2) draw companies' attention to the benefits of integrating gender into their business, foster dialogue, and create partnerships that can help put gender policies into effect. Our case studies show that partnerships are essential, and that corporate social responsibility is a process, not a quick fix.

### Situating the arguments

The two cases in this chapter show that gender-responsible business can have different approaches and impacts. In both cases, the main reasons for addressing gender issues is the business argument. For the case of *Allanblackia* nuts the women present **new market opportunities as suppliers**. Furthermore, addressing gender (and other social issues) is good for Unilever's **reputation**. In the case of Cynara another business argument turned up: **women in management positions contribute to better business**.

Here are some examples of how gender-responsible business benefited the company in question:



- Recognizing different positions and preferences among workers contributed to a working environment where both women and men could develop themselves and make a career. For Cynara Peru, this added value to the company as a whole.
- A participatory approach to identify workers' preferences can improve the working atmosphere. Cynara Peru's workers now have fewer complaints, feel they have a voice, and are confident to speak up.
- If a company's employees are satisfied and it has a good relationship with the surrounding community, the company also benefits.
- Knowing your workers reduces your risks. A company that knows what its male and female employees want finds it easier to address issues that might jeopardize its efficiency.
- Profit, productivity and innovation can go together with development goals and gender equity.

The cases also show that gender-responsible business can also benefit women's empowerment and help them rebuild their livelihoods.

### Women's empowerment

- The formation of groups, training and additional support (mainly from NGO partners) helped to strengthen women's negotiation positions and increased their confidence.
- Setting quotas for women's representation can help to avoid men taking over. In Tanzania, these quotas have helped prevent *Allanblackia* from becoming a "men's crop". Instead, the nuts are co-owned: both women and men have a say in price negotiations, share the income, and make sure that the community as well as individuals benefit.
- Mixing groups and sharing responsibilities can encourage women and men to take up new responsibilities and tasks.

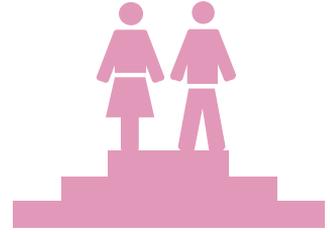
### Rebuilding livelihoods

- Tailoring market-linkage strategies to women's situations can reduce poverty. In the *Allanblackia* case, this was possible through the companies' partnership with an NGO, Faida MaLi. The linkage approach was based on studies that showed how men and women face different constraints to access markets.
- Introducing cash crops can improve the quality of life in small communities. In Tanzania, people built new houses and sent their children to school.
- In both the Tanzania and Peru cases, the company considered the impact of its actions on the surrounding communities.
- In both cases, a partnership with a local NGO helped serve the community better.
- Seeing a company as part of a community naturally commits the company to supporting community development.

The potential benefits on the different levels illustrate that there is a lot to say to develop gender responsible business. We have seen that this is not only about increasing numbers of women representatives, but also about building women's capacity to make gender equity work for business and for women.

# 9

## Conclusions



*Written jointly by: Anna Laven and Rhiannon Pyburn*

To understand how agricultural value chain can work better for women, businesses and farmers' livelihoods, we have tried to unravel, and find new combinations of, concepts central to both value chain development and to gender. We have teased out different arguments to support addressing gender issues in value chains, and we have identified different strategies that are being used.

There is a risk that we might have been over-enthusiastic in attempting to do thorough analyses at all these levels. Nevertheless, we hope that the book can be an inspiration for others to take up the gender challenge in their value chain work.

This chapter takes the reader briefly back through the steps in the book. It tries to "entangle the disentangled" – to bring the pieces back together again, but in a different way. We hope to provide some ideas on how to meet the challenge of changing agricultural value chains to become more gender equitable and more inclusive.

From the cases in this book, we see that addressing gender in value chains does no harm and is likely to benefit women, improve the performance of the chain, and even help people rebuild their livelihoods. The five broad strategies we explore in Chapter 4–8 demonstrate how different entry points can be used in interventions that support positive changes for women and men. The cases also show some of the limitations of each strategy, and indicate when each is appropriate and likely to be effective.

In most of the cases, several interventions were made to stimulate gender equity. This makes it difficult to attribute changes to one thing. It also reflects the complexity of gender relations and work to change them.

This book aims to support development organizations that focus on value chains to better address gender equity. This is so they can both improve the lives of women and support more robust, successful value-chain work. A key aspiration has been to expand the awareness of development organizations on how they might work on gender in value chains. The cases help us to see the bigger picture in terms of the kinds of strategies being used, their objectives, the level they target in the value chain, and when one strategy may be more effective than another. We hope that development organizations will be able to see where their gender and value chain activities plug in, and to contextualize the changes that they see.

## 9.1 Going back to the arguments

The book started by identifying different arguments on why addressing gender equity in agricultural value chain development is important. Many of those involved in developing agricultural value chains are still not at ease with the concept of gender, let alone trying to improve gender equitability. They often feel that donors or NGOs are imposing on them to take up gender in their policies and value chain work. What is needed is a set of convincing evidence and arguments as to why gender equity is important and what it has to do with a stakeholder's line of business.

To fill this gap, we presented three sets of arguments: **social justice**, **poverty reduction** and **business**. We believe that together these arguments make a strong case for addressing gender equity in agricultural value chain development.

Understanding the different rationales behind addressing gender equity in value chains is helpful for at least two reasons. First, by distinguishing different sets of arguments, it becomes easier to find sound entry points for gender-equitable interventions. This can help development organizations or businesses choose a particular strategy for the situation they face. Second, it sheds light on the incentive structure of the target group. This helps us to understand what motivates people to take up gender issues, and provides entry points for action. For example, why would a multinational company agree to put in place a quota to ensure women's participation? Knowing what triggers change is key for realizing it!

People need evidence if they are to be convinced of the benefits of addressing gender issues. We have distinguished three kinds of impacts. They are closely linked to the three sets of arguments:

- **Women's empowerment** (linked to the social justice argument)
- **Rebuilding livelihoods** (linked to the poverty alleviation argument)
- **Value chain performance** (linked to the business argument)

The cases show that not only is a mix of arguments often important for convincing stakeholders to address gender, but also that strategies to address gender equity may have multiple and mixed impacts. Documenting this can be useful for those who want to replicate efforts or upscale a particular strategy. A remaining concern is that we know little about how decisions are made within the household, even though this is critical for gender interventions. Another concern is that context is extremely important in enabling or hindering a given strategy.

## 9.2 Choosing the right strategy

We clustered the stories in this book into five chapters (4–8), each representing a broad strategy (Box 9.1).

For development organizations, three practical questions may come to bear:

- **When** should we use a particular strategy?

## Box 9.1. Strategies to build gender into value chains

### Mitigating resistance by building on tradition (Chapter 4)

- Professionalize women's traditional, informal activities
- Remove barriers to transform traditional responsibilities into new opportunities
- Create new roles for women in traditional activities
- Reframe 'caretaker' roles



### Creating space for women (Chapter 5)

- Support women in male-dominated chains
- Promote female entrepreneurs



### Organizing for change (Chapter 6)

- Capacity building
- Collective action
- Sensitize men
- Finance value chains for women



### Standards, certification and labels (Chapter 7)

- Use women-only labels, seals and standards
- Piggyback on existing standards and certification infrastructure



### Gender-responsible business (Chapter 8)

- Corporate social responsibility and shared value



- **How** can we know when to choose one strategy over another?
- **What** interventions are effective for each?

We address these questions below for each of the five strategies.

### *Mitigating resistance by building on tradition*

This cluster of strategies is very much about building on and transforming women's traditional work and roles. They are relevant in conservative communities with more rigidly defined gender roles, and in post-conflict or vulnerable settings. They tend not to shake up the status quo, but they allow first steps to improving women's conditions and positions. Many interventions work with these kinds of strategies: shea, livestock and dairying are just three that we describe. Green agriculture and the strategy of



reframing women's caretaker roles shifts towards a more transformational agenda, as green agriculture is a new opportunity for both men and women. Strategies in this cluster tend to be driven by a livelihood entry point: the aim being to help women earn more money.

### **Creating space for women**

The second set of strategies is about women doing new things – whether entering into male-dominated chains or becoming entrepreneurs. These strategies demand a more explicit shift in how women's roles are defined within a given context. They entail supporting women in a “man's world”. They require training and shifting perceptions at the household and societal levels. These strategies are driven by the aim to empower women – which is mainly a social justice motivation.



### **Organizing for change**

Then we come to a group of strategies which emerge from the earlier chapters when we consider the kinds of interventions needed to succeed. These are capacity building, collective action, sensitizing men and financing women's value chain initiatives. They are important ingredients to support change, and are relevant across most contexts. But they have to be tailored to each situation. These strategies are driven by the social justice argument. They focus on women's empowerment as well as the societal changes needed to make it happen (such as changes in men's and community perspectives as to what women can and cannot do). The strategies are also driven by a business argument: underserving women also harms business.



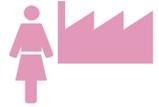
### **Standards, certification and labels**

The fourth set of strategies impact most of the chain in one way or another, from producer to consumer, as well as the chain context (e.g., standard setters and extension workers). Standards and other ways of differentiating products offer several entry points for addressing gender. They are of interest for development organizations if there is a market for a niche product (like woman-produced coffee), where social and environmental standards are already being complied with, or where women's work remains unrecognized in a male-dominated chain. These strategies take a livelihood approach (improving women's income) alongside an empowerment rationale (as they target marginalized women). Interestingly, using existing standards also reflects a business argument: that the value chain functions better when we know who is doing what and women can claim the rewards for their labour.



## Gender-responsible business

The final strategy lies with company that develops corporate social responsibility policies to address gender. This strategy combines a business argument (to improve chain performance) with a women's empowerment angle (it's the "right thing to do").



## 9.3 Engendering the chain empowerment matrix

Our second step was to take the reader through our own process of developing an analytical framework for gender equity in agricultural value chain development.

We built upon the original chain empowerment matrix (Figure 3.1), which uses two dimensions (chain activities and chain governance). This distinguishes four quadrants, each one reflecting a different strategy for upgrading. Bringing in a gender lens meant looking beyond the farmer to include the household and institutional context as additional domains. That enabled us to see the matrix in new different light.

We adapted the matrix to help us understand why women are positioned in a particular quadrant, to reveal the constraints and opportunities for women to upgrade, and to show how women can benefit from upgrading. We did this by bringing in two additional dimensions: **agency** (women's capabilities) and **structure** (contextual and institutional opportunities for change). The result is an engendered chain empowerment matrix that gives a more inclusive meaning to upgrading (Figure 3.8).

For each of the cases, the caseholders indicated changes along each of the four dimensions: chain activities, chain governance, agency and structure. That helped us understand what contributed to the change, and what hindered it. It also distinguished between interventions that triggered change (e.g., in capacity and attitude), those that removed barriers for change (e.g., lack of mobility), the impact of interventions, and how this was valued.

Let us look at the different meanings that a gender lens brings to the quadrants of the matrix.

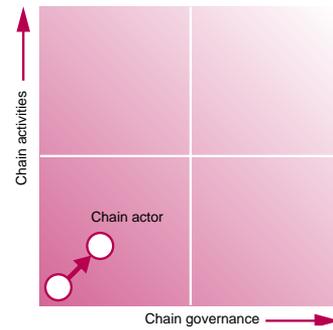
### *Upgrading as a chain actor: Doing better and being seen*

*Women smallholders become visible as crop specialists and their contributions are recognized and valued.*

Women's work in agriculture tends to be largely invisible. This is due in no small part to the kinds of work that women do on the farm, which tends to either be

reproductive work, or informal (e.g., taking care of livestock, collecting shea nuts). Once products are aggregated and ready for sale, men tend to step in.

Being unrecognized as economic actors is not only unjust; it is also highly inefficient. If women are not visible, then services tend not to be directed towards them. That limits their opportunities for learning how to produce better quality and larger volumes of produce.



In a number of cases we see deliberate attempts to make women’s contributions visible, and to build women’s capacity to perform better in the chain. Chapter 4 has a number of cases where upgrading as a chain actor was an important first step, for example, in the case of Ghana, where women traditionally collect shea nut (Case 4.2). Here, the project partners helped local communities and entrepreneurs to recognize the importance of shea in generating income, and the significant role that women entrepreneurs can play in this value chain.

Another example comes from livestock chain in northern Kenya (Case 4.3). Pastoralist women in the area looked after the milking animals and the young cows at the homestead, while the men and boys took care of the rest of the herd. The women’s work tended to be invisible: they did a lot, but it was the men who owned the animals and made decisions on what and when to sell. In response, the project partners built basic skills, such as literacy and finance, that women needed to take up economic activities.

The coffee case in Uganda (Case 6.2) shows that being recognized can positively influence women’s performance. The women would sell coffee beans too early so they could glean some income for themselves before the men returned for the main harvest and take the income. As women’s contributions became more recognized and they gained a greater say in household spending, they let the coffee beans ripen before harvest. That improved the quality and price.

Under upgrading as a chain actor we also include women who choose to diversify their production. For example, the cooperative in Sri Lanka (Case 4.5) that organizes dairy farmers (80% women) has begun to diversify into other products, including sweets, flavoured milk, cheese, curd and ghee. Women involved in this value addition have earned higher profits.

### Agency and structure

In this first quadrant, women upgrade as chain actors, but what do the additional dimensions – agency and structure – tell us? First, the examples show that building women’s basic capabilities (e.g., literacy, financial skills) is a pre-condition for women being recognized as chain actors and for them to access formal markets. Secondly, the example of Uganda (Case 6.2) shows that when women were rec-

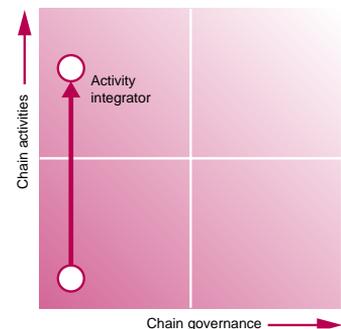
ognized as contributors to the household income, space was created to improve their performance in the coffee chain.

Changes in structure occur mainly as a consequence of upgrading as chain actors: men's perceptions of women being involved in business changed, and men became more appreciative of women's contributions to households and communities.

Without bringing in the dimensions of agency and structure, we would not have understood why, for example in the case of Uganda, women were not producing high-quality coffee in the first place. In the Kenya case, it helped us to understand the constraints that women face in accessing markets (lack of mobility), showing the limits of building women's capabilities if structural constraints are not changed.

### **Upgrading as an activity integrator: Choosing and being capable of moving up**

*Women choose to move into activities further up the chain, and they control the income that they earn. They gain the skills required and are confident.*



In agriculture, women are mainly involved in primary production, rather than in trading and processing. Upgrading as an activity integrator requires women to have not only the skills, but also the confidence, time and motivation to take on new tasks. Moreover, it requires access to resources, ownership of the resources, control over the income the activities generate, and access to markets. The example of shea butter in Guinea (Case 4.1) shows the importance of ownership. Here, because women became owners of the processing equipment, they could produce more and better-quality shea butter as well as sell to more favourable markets.

The book gives a number of other examples where women have benefited by taking up activities further along the value chain. One is the dairy case in Sri Lanka (Case 4.5), which shows how women who used to collect milk started processing it and selling as a group. Because they are usually responsible for the cattle, it is usually the women (rather than the men) who gets the income from dairying.

The case of rice in Mali (Case 6.1) also shows how capacity-building efforts resulted in improvements in chain performance and in women taking up activities further along in the chain.

A number of cases point out the barriers that women face in accessing markets. Two ways to overcome these are to bring markets closer to the women (in Chapter 4.2) and to increase their mobility (in Chapter 4.3).

Upgrading as an activity integrator is also about the ability to make choices. The story of coffee in Uganda (Box 5.4) shows the kinds of considerations women

need to take into account when choosing what they do and what to grow. A woman may prefer to stick with subsistence crops (like bananas) where she controls the income, rather than a more lucrative cash crop (coffee) where she has no say over how the money is spent, and where the family's food security might suffer. Her power to make decisions in the household influences the choice she will make. Another factor may be the wish to keep risks low by having several different sources of food and income, rather than concentrating on a single, non-food crop. A third factor may be labour: women are busy, so must choose how best to use their time.

Box 7.13 on organic cotton in Mali is another example. Despite encouragement, women were not interested in working in the cotton fields. They preferred instead to make the organic pesticides, which they could combine with their other household and reproductive responsibilities. This shows how different factors can influence women's decisions, leading them to choose not to expand their chain activities or start growing a new crop.

### Agency and structure

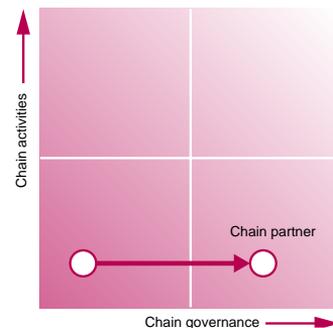
In this second quadrant, agency plays a major role: women need skills and confidence to upgrade vertically. Moreover, they need to value a shift from primarily collection and production to, for example, processing or branding. An important question is: is there really value created (i.e., do advantages outweigh the disadvantages) for the women? Workload is another key issue. In a number of cases we saw that husbands eventually took up tasks in the household to support their wives' economic activities. Without that re-division of household tasks, the women could easily be overburdened by their involvement in the chain, and might prefer not to move further along the chain.

Like in the first quadrant, changes in structure occur mainly as a result of upgrading. Here it is not so much about changing formal institutions but more about contributions to changes in norms, values and perceptions.

### Upgrading by developing chain relationships: Being recognized partners

*Developing chain partnerships and removing constraints to participation in decision-making. Rules, regulations and policies are gender-sensitive.*

Being part of a farmer group does not automatically mean that women have decision-making power in the chain. Some women do not use their voice. Or they may not be given the space to speak up. If their contributions are not recognized in the chain, they may not be considered as partners.



A key intervention for women to get recognized as partners is to help them organize. Organization enables them to aggregate produce and improve their bargaining power in a chain. It makes it possible for them to get training, services and credit, and to develop their skills and confidence. Chapter 6.2 on collective action illustrates how working together can contribute to women's self-esteem and positioning.

A few cases emphasized strengthening linkages between women and development partners. In the dairy case in Sri Lanka (Case 4.5), a lot of effort went into institutionalizing women-managed dairy producer organizations, and linking them to the formal cooperative dairy industry and other related services. In the case of *Allanblackia* chain in Tanzania (Case 8.1), the NGO Faida MaLi established relationships between Unilever and the female farmers. The NGO made sure that women were part of the contractual negotiations and arrangements when the crop became commercialized. It ensured that quotas were applied for female representation in training programmes and within producer groups. This ensured that women were represented in training, producer organizations and price negotiations.

### **Agency and structure**

Women face constraints to being recognized as business partners, for example when ideas on women's work are conservative or traditional. Affirmative action to put structures (like a quota) in place, can make sure women are represented. But at the same time women have to gain skills and the confidence to engage in business relations, and men in decision-making positions must start to appreciate women's involvement. This may mean it is necessary to sensitize the men (Chapter 6.3).

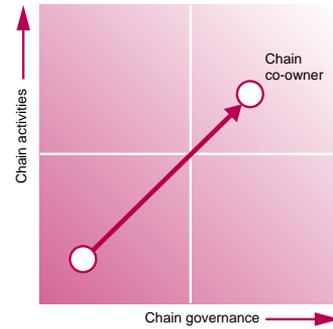
Constraints can also occur at the level of organization. If women are still invisible in a particular value chain, getting them organized can be a bridge too far. Or women can be excluded from a particular group.

What would we have missed, if we hadn't brought in the dimensions of structure and agency? First, without these dimensions it would be difficult to understand the potential role of quotas and how they can be helpful if combined with other interventions. Bringing in the idea of agency helped us to understand how in more vulnerable setting, significant efforts are needed to build women's confidence before they can take part in making decisions.

### ***Upgrading by developing ownership over the chain: Women take up positions of leadership***

*Women both possess the capacities and have the opportunity to co-own enterprises and build direct linkages with other chain actors, including consumer markets. Rules, regulations and policies support women's leadership.*

This kind of upgrading seems to represent the ideal, but this is not necessarily so. The Café Femenino case (Case 7.1) illustrates the opportunities for women in this quadrant. In this case, Peruvian female coffee producers became co-owners and decision-makers in the coffee chain. Interventions by the importing company led to higher-quality production as well as female representation throughout the chain. Café Femenino is now a successful female coffee brand in the world market. The Ricomida women-run restaurants in Bolivia (Case 5.4) are another example. In this case, women own their businesses and are able to expand their activities and take business decisions.



Interventions that end up in the fourth quadrant often are the result of a number of smaller changes and a mix of interventions. This kind of upgrading is often an outcome of a longer process. Changing norms and values can take time, and changes in formal institutions do not happen overnight.

### Agency and structure

In this quadrant women need skills, confidence and a supportive environment where barriers for ownership are removed. For standards or certification, this may involve (or stimulate) structural change. For example, the Con Manos de Mujer standard (Case 7.2) has a requirement that women be owners or managers of the coffee plantation; this has led to women becoming legal owners of property.

We have come to see that the dimensions drawn from the gender literature and social sciences – structure and agency – are in fact broader categories of the value chain dimensions, chain activities and chain governance. We also see that this broadening is essential in order to look beyond the chain and to begin addressing gender dynamics more consciously.

## 9.4 A final word on gender and value chain development

Our approach is pragmatic. While our long-term aspiration would be gender redistributive interventions and change, we take the position that doing something is better than doing nothing. So any entry point is better than none. We hope that even gender-neutral interventions can benefit women, and that these can be used as a catalyst for more disruptive change. That is “disruptive” in a good sense – that by showing successes, community fear (particularly among men) will be assuaged, women’s confidence will grow, and doors will open in terms of more opportunities for women (and ultimately for men too) to venture into new kinds of work and gender relations.

We see change as a process of constant renewal and improvements. We celebrate the little changes while working for bigger ones. Our gender colleagues may find this too slow and frustrating. We count on them to shake things up in other areas. But for now, we want to jump on the entry points that reveal themselves in value chain development and make lots of small improvements rather than counting on or waiting for one big change or paradigm shift.

Strict value chain practitioners may also be annoyed that the chains illustrated in this book are not of the most “efficient” or “business-like” examples, or that there are many examples of typically “female” chains (such as honey and shea). Some colleagues claim that such chains do not have a future for larger-scale success in export or national markets. Our position has been that considering only economics or only good business is not enough. Nor is it enough to consider gender alone, without considering livelihoods, income generation and quality issues. It is in the bridge between the two fields where our work lies. That means compromising. And we also see synergies where the two fields together are much stronger than alone.

Our value chain peers may also be critical of the stereotypes of “lazy men” or the idea that “women are better at handling money than men” that come out in some of the cases. We recognize the shallowness of these stereotypes. Although they are pervasive, they are by no means universal. We have chosen to be led by the cases and related trends in the emerging field of gender and value chain development, rather than by ideals.

In bringing together these three approaches – economic, social justice and poverty reduction – and considering the impact on both sexes, we see that each case has a different mix. Some focus more on income generation or the business angle, while others emphasize social justice and getting women recognized in the chain. Some focus on men (in Chapter 6.3 on sensitization), while others address women or both sexes.

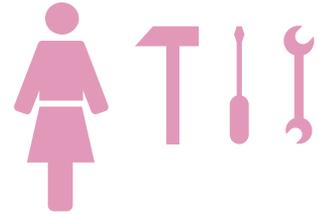
Gender does refer to both men and women. And as Andrea Cornwall persuasively wrote in the *Guardian Weekly* on 21 March 2012, only focusing on women and girls is also forgetting half of the population: the male half. The impacts of very successful programmes to promote girls are already beginning to be seen on boys. This is not the aim. Boys and men as partners, community members and workers also need attention and cannot be forgotten in development work.

That said, the fact of the matter is that men have for a long time been the fall-back or the norm. Programmes have been directed, implicitly or explicitly, towards them. The development world, not just gender experts, is now finally amenable to addressing this imbalance. This reshuffle is reflected in this book. We have far more examples of women-focused initiatives than on those that target both men and women. This is the situation now, but is not a long-term ideal. Gender means men and women.



# 10

## Approaches, tools and resources



*Written jointly by: Roel Snelder, Mieke Vanderschaeghe, Angelica Senders*

Many techniques exist to map and assess value chains and the services that support them. But they tend to be gender-blind: they do not show men's and women's activities separately. That makes it impossible to see the power differences that enable or constrain women's participation in the chain.

To build robust, sustainable value chains that are gender-sensitive, we need to adapt these tools so they collect, map and analyse data for women and men separately. This section offers a selection of such tools. It contains:

- Examples of comprehensive approaches in practice.
- A selection of some specific tools to use.
- An overview of reference guides and websites.

### **10.1 Approaches in practice**

This subchapter describes three approaches which include a comprehensive process to integrating gender in value chain work. These approaches share several common aspects: an emphasis on multiple stakeholders, the involvement of both men and women, and proceeding step by step.

## Approach 1: Gender Action Learning System

The Gender Action Learning System (GALS) is a basis for win-win negotiation between the most vulnerable and powerful actors in the value chain. It complements other approaches to value chains development where benefits are expected to trickle down to the most vulnerable.

### Approach

The methodology is a comprehensive package involving:

- Strengthening skills and negotiating power of the most vulnerable.
- Quality upgrading to increase incomes of the poorest.
- Working with the private sector to change attitudes, behaviours and strategy.
- Multi-stakeholder negotiation and value chain planning.
- Linkages to service providers such as financial, business development and legal aid.

### Method

The methodology is community-led with a focus on using pictorial diagramming tools. It starts with the most vulnerable poor farmers, landless farm workers and small village-level traders. There are four overlapping stages:

1. **Preliminary mapping** of main chain activities, stakeholders, value distribution, governance and gender inequalities.
2. **Participatory action research** with different vulnerable stakeholder groups and, where feasible, more powerful stakeholders.
3. **Identification, planning and negotiation** of multi-stakeholder win-win strategies through value chain multi-stakeholder events.
4. **Sustainable action learning process**, including peer up-scaling, policy advocacy, monitoring change, and establishing participatory on-going planning in annual meetings, value chain fairs and with local government.

### Further reading

Paineto, B., L. Mayoux and T. Reemer. 2009. Balanced trees grow richer beans: Community-led action learning for gender justice in Uganda coffee value chains. Paper presented to International Coffee Conference, Costa Rica, Nov. 2009. <http://tinyurl.com/6ha3wet>

Gender action learning: Training in GALS tools. Video. <http://tinyurl.com/652amao>

## Box 10.1. The Bukonzo Joint Cooperative Microfinance Society, Uganda

From 2009 to 2010, the Bukonzo Joint Cooperative Microfinance Society in Kasese, western Uganda, piloted the Gender Action Learning System. It did this in collaboration with Oxfam Novib's WEMAN programme, independent consultant Linda Mayoux, the Green Home Women's Development Association, and the Babughirana Primary Cooperative, co-funded by IFAD. The focus was on value chains for coffee, fruits, maize and beans.

The Bukonzo cooperative went through all four stages in the Gender Action Learning System process (see also Case 6.2).

### Mapping and participatory action research.

The society members identified various subgroups: widows with families, separated women, women and men in polygamous households, women and men working together, women working alone, and absentee male farmers. Most of the poorest people as well as village traders were represented. Community engagement started with individual market mapping and drawing "gender-balance trees" (Figure 5) to analyse the contributions and benefits from coffee production and trading.

Some of the gender inequalities identified were unequal property rights (mainly land and animals), domestic violence, and unequal workloads and distribution of benefits. In the value chain there was marked discrimination against women at all levels. A lack of openness and collaboration between chain actors made the chain very inefficient. Actors found it difficult to invest because of their dependence on credit and indebtedness, and because men spent money on alcohol. To secure women's access to land, elders and government officials have to be involved in obtaining joint land agreements, leases, or agreements about the inheritance and use of land.

**Identification, planning and negotiation.** Some women used the tools to negotiate within their own households. Their husbands did their own analysis in separate men's groups. These analyses led to women and men creating joint visions and plans for their household's future.

**Sustainable action learning.** Male coffee traders in the village got involved more quickly than anticipated as they became aware of the potential benefits (such as the prospect of becoming investors themselves and being less dependent on moneylenders). The Gender Action Learning System approach is being integrated into planning by the Bukonzo cooperative as well as by the various producer and trader organizations in the selected value chains.

*More information: Paineto Baluku, Bukonzo Joint Cooperative Microfinance Society*



Figure 10.1. A gender-balance tree

## Approach 2: Integrating gender into agricultural value chains

Integrating Gender into Agricultural Value Chains is a way to train practitioners to gather gender-related information in a systematic way and to improve gender equity. The approach bridges the gap between the fields of gender and value chains. It enables practitioners in these two areas to find ways to make a value chain more competitive, at the same time as promoting equity between women and men. The approach was designed for USAID's Office of Women in Development.

### Approach

The approach first builds practitioners' awareness of how gender issues affect agricultural value chains. It then shows them how to collect and analyse information about gender, identify problems, and find solutions. It has five phases:

1. **Mapping the gender value chain.** Practitioners learn how to collect and organize information about gender at various stages in the value chain.
2. **Identifying gender-based constraints.** The practitioners analyse the information they have collected, and identify the restrictions that men and women face in the value chain.
3. **Assessing the impact of constraints.** They check how the constraints affect various aspects of the value chain.
4. **Removing constraints.** They plan how to remove the gender-based constraints that affect the chain.

### Box 10.2. The Kenya maize development programme

The Kenya Maize Development Programme (2002–10) was a multifaceted USAID-funded project that used the Integrating Gender into Agricultural Value Chains approach to analyse gender issues in the maize value chain.

Project staff designed a questionnaire and interviewed various chain actors on gender roles and relations. They found that the oldest man in the household usually decided how to use the family's land. Although the women looked after the cash, the men had more say on how to spend the income from selling the maize. The staff concluded that the women had few incentives to increase their productivity. The household's resources were not used in an efficient way. That reinforced the fiction that maize farming is a man's activity; the women's essential role in cultivation, harvesting and storage was ignored. That had several effects: families were less likely to have enough to eat throughout the year, and they produced and sold less maize than they could have. That had negative consequences for national food security.

The staff identified various ways to remove these constraints. These included helping buyers to make sure that both women and men benefited from maize sales, requiring couples to have joint bank accounts, viewing farming as a family business (rather than just the man's), using gender-inclusive language and images, and offering training on family budgeting and decision-making.

*More information: Deborah Rubin, Integrating Gender into Agricultural Value Chains, drubin@culturalpractice.com*

5. **Measuring success.** They learn how to measure improvements in equality and chain operations.

### Method

The approach combines various methods:

- **Classroom instruction.** This covers the concepts of gender, value chain development, gender analysis, selecting gender indicators, exercises to map the gender value chain, and interview techniques.
- **Field visits.** Participants interview different value-chain actors to collect data on gender roles and relations along the chain.
- **Synthesis.** This combines concepts from the classroom with data collected in the field and from project documents. Participants identify constraints, think of how to overcome them, and identify indicators to measure success.

### Further reading

USAID. 2009. Promoting gender equitable opportunities in agricultural value chains: A handbook. <http://tinyurl.com/6fd5o79>

## Approach 3: Gendered economic competitiveness

This approach reveals the potential gender biases in economic assessments before intervening in a value chain. It looks at both informal and formal situations. It assesses the impacts on income and employment of investing in developing the chain.

### Approach

The methodology is based on in-depth, gendered value-chain mapping. It involves multiple stakeholders in the chain, including producers, processors, and service providers.

### Method

- 1. Initial understanding.** Develop a hypothesis about gender in the value chain. This enables you to select the methodology and tools to use. In the example in Box 10.3, the team considered the number of women-owned processing units and the employment they created.
- 2. Key informant interviews.** Select the location to study and interview key informants to identify the relevant actors. Be sure to interview women and search for female actors in value chain.
- 3. First value chain meeting.** Invite actors to a meeting to map the value chain.
- 4. Detailed interviews.** Elaborate the initial map of the value chain through detailed interviews and visits to markets. Map the employment in the chain.
- 5. Analysis.** Analyse the division of labour between men and women, and their access and control of resources. This gives an understanding of the household dynamics involved.
- 6. Second meeting.** Use Venn diagrams to analyse the relationships and the commercial, financial, information and knowledge flows among the actors.
- 7. Third meeting.** Present a detailed map of the value chain and an impact analysis of the proposed interventions in the chain.
- 8. Fourth meeting.** Guide the participants through visioning of the value chain development and planning.

## 10.2 Tools

This subchapter describes a number of tools to use at various stages in developing gender-sensitive value chains. They cover the following:

- **Scoping:** gendered value chain selection.
- **Analysis:** macro-, meso- and micro gendered value-chain analysis.
- **Analysis:** examples of gender mapping.
- **Strategizing:** costs and benefits for men and women.
- **Upgrading:** decision making between households and producer organizations.
- **Measuring:** gender and value chain empowerment diamond.

### The Gender in Value Chains Toolkit<sup>1</sup>

These tools are just some of those included in a toolkit compiled by the Agri-Pro-Focus Learning Group (<http://genderinvaluechains.ning.com>) for development practitioners. Other tools in this toolkit range from extensive questionnaires for field research to concise tools to be applied in one-day workshops. The toolkit aims to encourage practitioners to incorporate gender issues into their value-chain work, and to incorporate value-chain approaches into gender development efforts. It draws on manuals produced by USAID, SNV, ILO, GTZ and others.

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1 Readers are encouraged to comment on the tools in the kit, and to suggest additional materials to be made accessible via the toolkit. See: <http://tinyurl.com/bq5quxn>

## Tool 1: Selecting a value chain to improve

It can be risky for a project to select a value chain or sub-sector based on superficial observation: the chain may offer little potential either for upgrading or for achieving gender objectives. So it is important to choose the value chain based on the development intervention's objectives. For a gender point of view, it must be able to increase women's empowerment and gender equality: the chain must work for women.

To choose a chain, a participatory process is required to balance the needs and interests of various stakeholders. It should aim for a consensus on the strategies to use, transparency in decision-making, and accountability.

### Objectives

- To compare value chains based on criteria of growth potential and gender.
- To reach consensus on the choice of the chains to upgrade.

### Used by

Practitioners (professionals) and farmers (men and women).

### Methods

**Step 1: Information gathering on potential value chains.** Gather basic information on the value chains in the geographical area:

- Market or growth potential.

### Box 10.3. Milk processing in Nicaragua

A Millennium Challenge Account-Nicaragua project in León and Chinandega departments, supported by Technoserve and CARE, focused on the household-scale dairy industry. Local women working at home processed raw milk to make curd and fresh cheese intended for the nearby markets. At the beginning of the project, both livestock keepers and technical staff thought that these small-scale processors could not be competitive with large, industrial dairies: they handled small volumes, lacked quality controls, and disposed of waste inadequately. The project intended to focus on larger-scale dairies that were assumed to be more efficient. The small-scale processors saw this emphasis as a threat to their businesses.

SNV and Consejo de Mujeres de Occidente mapped the value chain from a gender perspective. This revealed that the small-scale processors had significant potential and could be competitive. It also showed that the project's intended strategy would harm traditional sources of employment in milk processing.

As a result, the project adapted its strategy. It supported the development of the small-scale businesses, helping them to get formally established, develop new products, create trade names, obtain health permits and barcodes, and strengthen ties to supermarkets. The various stakeholders in an area now work in alliance, and investments between them are better balanced. The project team came to recognize the role and potential of women in value chains.

*More information: Mieke Vanderschaeghe*

**Table 10.1. Criteria for selecting value chains to consider**

Potential for growth	Potential for women's empowerment and gender equality	Pragmatic criteria
<p>Positive growth trend of the value chain, unmet market demand</p> <p>Available sales outlet, high interest of buyers in the product</p> <p>Scope for expanding production; scope for value addition through processing or product improvement (new products for which there is a market)</p> <p>Low costs of the value chain vis-à-vis competitors</p> <p>Other competitive advantage vis-à-vis competitors (unique product, local specialty)</p> <p>Potential for collaboration and coordination between actors for value chain upgrading</p> <p>Sufficient technological and managerial level of enterprises for upgrading and innovation</p> <p>Access to infrastructure, qualified workers, raw materials, inputs</p> <p>Sufficient access to financial services</p> <p>Sufficient access to business development services</p>	<p>High share of women employed in the value chain as compared to the economy at large</p> <p>High number of women entrepreneurs in the value chain</p> <p>Women control equipment or assets</p> <p>Women have (or can acquire) skills for profitable value addition in processing and diversification</p> <p>Women control the sales income and the enterprise</p> <p>Close to house</p> <p>Low barriers to entry for small-scale and poor entrepreneurs (small scale of production, low start-up costs, no need for major capital investment, use of low-tech skills)</p> <p>Low entry barriers for women entrepreneurs (time and mobility, access to technology and assets, cultural constraints)</p> <p>Offers new opportunities for women</p> <p>In line with livelihood conditions (year-round income, using family labour, rapid returns, contributing to food security, conserving the environment, not reducing availability of clean water)</p> <p>Total potential for women's empowerment and gender equality</p>	<p><b>Outreach</b></p> <p>Size of value chain in relation to project resources</p> <p>Significant number of women employed and new job opportunities</p> <p>Significant number of small farmers, small enterprises and small companies</p> <p>Significant area covered</p> <p><b>Prospects of success</b></p> <p>Own initiatives and commitment of chain actors, their readiness for change</p> <p>Existence of some level of organization of chain actors</p> <p>Sufficient resources (time, funds, and know-how) to invest in chain development</p> <p>Existence of partners to collaborate with, demand of investors and partners</p> <p>Existence of institutions and service providers (financial, entrepreneurial, technological, gender) to support value chain actors</p> <p>Conducive framework conditions and business environment</p> <p><b>Programme-related aspects</b></p> <p>Relevance to government economic policy priorities</p> <p>Corresponding to project objectives, mandate and resources</p> <p>Relevance to mandated area</p> <p>Synergies and scope for cooperation with other support programmes</p>

**Table 10.2. Questions for assessing growth potential in a value chain**

Questions	Score <sup>a</sup>	Weight	Total
What are the prospects for future demand growth?		3	
Are traders willing to buy more of the product?		2	
Can new products be developed through processing, or product improvement for which a market exists?		1	
Can the product be supplied to the consumer at attractive costs?		1	
What are the competitive advantages of producers (cost, product characteristics)?		3	
Is there potential for increased cooperation in the value chain?		2	
Do enterprises in the value chain have the management capacity for upgrading and innovation?		3	
Is infrastructure, qualified labour force, raw material, inputs sufficiently available?		3	
Are financial services sufficiently available?		1	
Are business development services for quality improvement of the production process sufficiently available?		1	
<b>Overall total for growth potential</b>			

<sup>a</sup> 0: (no, not at all) to 5 (yes, very important).

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/6aksjsx>

- Potential to contribute to increased women empowerment and gender equality.
- Pragmatic criteria.

You may gather the data from secondary sources (e.g., research reports) in combination with interviews and discussion with various stakeholders: government, NGOs, donors, the private sector, community organizations, and women and men producers. Gather information on market demand, agronomy and environment. Identify key actors for various agricultural products in the area. Pay special attention to the market structure for these products and the potential for smallholders and women's participation.

**Step 2: Participatory workshop for gender-sensitive value chain selection.** At the beginning of the workshop, explain the criteria to be used for selecting the value chains. Present the information gathered in the first step on the market demand and potential for women's empowerment and gender equality.

**Table 10.3. Questions to assess a value chain's potential for women's empowerment and gender equality**

Questions	Score	Weight	Total
Is the share of women employed in the value chain relatively high?		2	
Are there many female entrepreneurs in the value chain?		2	
Do women control equipment and assets?		3	
Do women have (or can they acquire) the skills needed for interesting value addition through processing or product diversification?		1	
Do women control the sales income and the enterprise?		2	
Can the work take place close to home?		1	
Is this a value chain with low barriers to enter for poor entrepreneurs (small scale of production, low start-up costs, not requiring major capital investment, using low-tech skills).		1	
Is this a value chain with low barriers to enter for women (time and mobility, access to technology and assets, cultural constraints)?		2	
Does this value chain offer new opportunities for women?		4	
Is the activity in the value chain in line with livelihood conditions (year-round income, using family labour, rapid returns, contributing to food security, keeping the environment intact, not reducing availability of clean water)?		2	
<b>Overall total for gender potential</b>			

<sup>a</sup> 0: (no, not at all) to 5 (yes, very important).

You can choose a qualitative or a quantitative approach. In the **qualitative approach**, groups of participants evaluate the candidate value chains based on their potential for growth and for women's empowerment. Tables 10.2 and 10.3 list some questions they can consider. They present their results to the plenary, backing their decision with their main arguments. The plenary then reaches a consensus on which value chains to pursue.

In the **quantitative approach**, the groups give scores from 0 (no, not at all) to 5 (yes, very important) to each value chain according to various questions on potential for growth (Table 10.2). They do the same for the value chain's potential for gender equity and women's empowerment (Table 10.3). They multiply these scores by weights, then sum the totals to give an overall total for that chain.

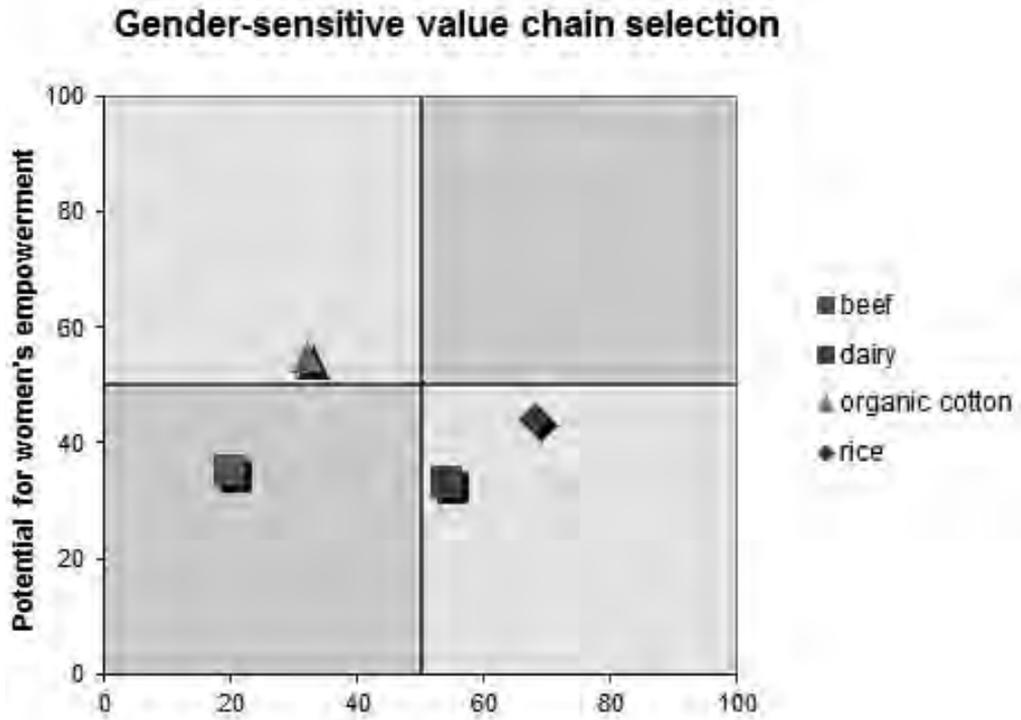


Figure 10.2. Example of a graph to compare the potential of four value chains for growth and gender

The participants can compare different value chains by comparing the scores for growth and gender for each chain. They can plot these in a graph like Figure 10.2.

**Step 3. Selection of value chains.** There may be trade-offs between growth and gender. In Figure 10.2, the most promising value chain in terms of growth (rice) is not the best for gender potential, while the best in terms of gender (organic cotton) offers the prospect of only mediocre growth.

The group has to balance such trade-offs: should it opt for a low-value “women’s product”, or select one with fewer prospects for women but where more value is added? It might also opt to improve the position of women in a value chain dominated by men.

- A traditional “women’s product” might yield only minor increases in income and low margins, but might give women opportunities to strengthen their organization, build their skills, learn how to negotiate with the private sector, and access market services.
- A mixed organization in (for example) a bulk product for export might lead to higher incomes, but might offer opportunities for fewer women.
- Focusing on a chain dominated by men may enable improvements in working conditions for female labourers or unpaid family labour, as well as make it more likely that their work is recognized.

Projects may decide to work with one of these strategies or a combination.

### **More information**

Agri-ProFocus Network. Gender in value chains. 3.3: Value chain selection. <http://genderinvaluechains.ning.com/page/downloads>

Oxfam GB. Grow. Sell. Thrive. Women's economic leadership in agricultural markets. <http://growsellthrive.org/>

Springer-Heinze, A. 2007. Value links manual: The methodology of value chain promotion. GTZ, Eschborn. <http://tinyurl.com/cxkgtyb>

## Tool 2: Analysing the chain from a gender perspective at the macro, meso and micro levels

It is important to understand gender issues in a value chain at various levels: macro, meso and micro. This tool consists of checklists of questions to ask at each level, divided into four broad topics: gender roles, access to resources, control over benefits, and influence on enabling factors.

The purpose is to identify and facilitate discussion on any gaps, discrimination and other key gender issues, so enabling the underlying causes to be identified and suitable interventions to be determined.

### Objectives

To raise awareness of the different stakeholders that they act in a complex system with mutual influences that can be positive or negative.

### Used by

Practitioners in desk studies, field work and focus group discussions.

### Methods

Use the checklists in Tables 10.4 to 10.6 to identify items to investigate at each level. Then collate and analyse the results in Table 10.7.

**Macro level.** The emphasis at this level (Table 10.4) is on two aspects:

- The **cultural setting** (ethnic context, religion, ideology, norms and values) regarding women's and men's roles and responsibilities
- The **regulations and legislations** around labour, access to resources (inheritance law, land, etc.), market demand (local, national, international) and gender equality.

**Meso level.** This analysis deals with the gender sensitivity of local institutions and organizations and their delivery systems. It investigates whether they reflect gender equality principles in their structure, in their culture, in the services they provide, and in the way these services are provided (producer groups, business development services, etc.) (Table 10.5).

**Micro level.** This analysis deal with outreach and impacts. The micro level helps identify major constraints faced by women at the household level, which will have repercussions on the meso and macro levels (Table 10.6).

**Analysis.** Feed the outcomes of the analysis into Table 10.7. Use this to identify key gender-based issues (constraints and opportunities) and appropriate actions.

### More information

Agri-ProFocus Network. Gender in value chains. 4.1: Data collection for value chain analysis at macro-, meso and micro level. <http://genderinvaluechains.ning.com/page/downloads>

Terrillon, J. 2010. Gender mainstreaming in value chain development: Practical guidelines and tools. Corporate Network Agriculture SNV. <http://tinyurl.com/5ruvj4>

**Table 10.4. Checklist for macro-level value-chain analysis**

Checklist: macro level	
<b>Gender roles</b>	<p>What is share of men and women working in this value chain in each activity (supply, production, processing, transportation, trade)?</p> <p>Are they part of the formal or the informal economy?</p> <p>What are the functional as well as sexual divisions of labour and roles within the different segments of the value chain (production, processing, trading and marketing, consumers, etc.)?</p> <p>Are there any segments where the presence of women is more important? Are women involved in stages where value added is generated? Where is actual income earned?</p> <p>What is the visibility and value granted to women's roles? What are the perceptions by women themselves, men and the community? What is the nature of women's work? Is it a temporary or casual type of work? Are women used only as unpaid labour?</p>
<b>Gendered access to resources</b>	<p>What are men's and women's entitlements? What are the characteristics and factors that mediate men's and women's access to and control over different types of resources (natural, productive and services)?</p> <p>What is women's access to information on production, organizations and services available? Through what means of communication? Are these adapted to the possibilities of women?</p> <p>What are the capabilities of women to use these resources?</p> <p>Who owns the land, trees, harvest, etc?</p> <p>Is information more difficult to obtain for women producers in "feminine" or in mixed value chains? What about access to information for women in other segments of the value chain (e.g., processors or traders)</p> <p>What are the main constraints faced by women in different segments of the value chain? (women's lower level of education, more marginalized and lesser access to "networks", project, programmes, less visible within segments of the value chain, less control over information etc.)</p> <p>Any specific information on market segments relevant for gender issues? (E.g., increase product offer to low-income consumers in order to improve quality of life such as nutrition)</p> <p>How can poor groups and other stakeholders obtain information about services in the sector, or market information?</p>

**Checklist: macro level**

**Gendered control over benefits**

- Are there any uneven power relationships? Any gender-related discriminations or exclusions?
- How is power distributed within production and exchange relationships across the value chain?
- Are benefits distributed or concentrated in one segment of the chain?
- Who decides? Who controls benefits?
- What are the disempowering dynamics?
- What are the entitlement capabilities of men and women throughout the value chain? Is there any uneven distribution of these capabilities?
- What alternatives (choices) do women have regarding chain activities and chain management?
- What is the ability of producers (male/female) to influence the price? What are the opportunities for negotiation (voice, participation, inclusiveness) (indebtedness, sub-optimal contracting)? Who signs the contract for the sale of the product?
- Do women in different segments of the value chain earn more income following the intervention (if any)?
- Are women's roles changing? Do they take leadership positions? Do they sign contracts?
- What is women's own perception of change? Did they gain more self-confidence, credibility?
- Can these changes be interpreted as empowerment?

**Gendered influence on enabling factors**

- What is women's ability to influence decisions, policies or programmes at all levels?
- Do they have access to specific spaces of power (invited or claimed spaces), and places of power (municipal council, parliament, etc.)? Do they have the opportunity to speak? Are women's voices heard? Are they listened to? Which women's voices?
- Are women in specific segments of this value chain organized?
- Do they build strategic alliances with institutions working on gender issues such as women's rights organizations and platforms?
- Are institutions working on women's and gender issues in this sector? Are women producers or farmers associations involved in decision-making at national policy and planning levels?

**Table 10.5. Checklist for meso-level value-chain analysis**

<b>Checklist: meso-level</b>	
<b>Gender roles</b>	<p>What is women's role and positioning within these organizations?</p> <p>Do they face specific constraints (representation in decision-making instances, power to influence decisions, etc.)?</p>
<b>Gendered access to resources</b>	<p><b>Access to land, water and technology</b></p> <p><b>Access to information and education</b></p> <p><b>Access to and responsiveness of value chain development services</b></p> <p>What is women's access to business development services?</p> <p>Do female producer groups have the same access to business development services? If not, why?</p> <p>Are technological innovations and investments for instance specifically addressed at men, or also at women? Are they adapted to women's needs (physical strength and daily schedules)?</p> <p>Are women-specific business development services needed to support female producers?</p> <p>Are business development services adapted to female producers' specific needs (daily schedules, lower educational levels, etc.)?</p> <p>Is child care available?</p> <p>Do service providers know how to perform gender mainstreaming to better analyse, understand and address these constraints? Are they attentive to delivering gender sensitive services?</p> <p>Do they apply institutional or organizational gender mainstreaming?</p> <p>Employment in business development services: does it foster employment of women? Are employment opportunities equitable? How are working conditions?</p> <p><b>Access to and responsiveness of financial services</b></p> <p>Do women who concentrate in specific segments of value chains face particular constraints in accessing financial services? What are these constraints?</p> <p>What are their specific needs? (investment and cash flow needs, school fees, food items)</p> <p>Are financial services adapted to their needs? What are the most suitable financial products?</p> <p>Are there any institutions (private or public sector) which specialize in facilitating women's access to financial services?</p>

**Gendered control over benefits**

Are women members of producer groups?

Do they take part in meetings? Do they have the right to voice their needs and to vote?

Do they have the right to access social and financial benefits offered by the organization?

Do they have the opportunity to be elected to governing bodies and if so, are they elected and to what degree?

Are there any special measures in the organization's constitution, such as quotas, to guarantee their participation in decision-making?

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**Gendered influence on enabling factors**

What are female leaders' capacities to influence collectively decision making about sector services and value chain development?

How can those who do not have access to resources and services claim to be included?

In what "claimed or invited" spaces and places?

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**Table 10.6. Checklist for micro-level value-chain analysis**

<b>Checklist: micro level</b>	
<b>Gender roles</b>	<p>What is the sexual division of labour within the household (socially determined gender roles)?</p> <p>What are men's and women's reproductive roles? What tasks are performed by men and women?</p> <p>How much time and energy are spent?</p> <p>How does it relate to women and men's other roles (reproductive / community)?</p> <p>How does the work performed in the value chain add to their work burden?</p>
<b>Gendered access to resources</b>	<p>What is women's and men's access to resources in order to perform tasks?</p> <p>Are there any specific constraints faced by women in particular?</p> <p>See Tool 4 on differentiated access to resources.</p>
<b>Gendered control over benefits</b>	<p>Do women and men benefit equally at the household level? Who earns income? Who decides on the use of the income? Who decides on family budget allocation? What is women's decision-making power on spending of the household budget?</p> <p>Are other types of benefits generated (financial, visibility, credibility, better access to information and social networks)?</p>
<b>Gendered influence on power dynamics within the household</b>	<p>How are women's contributions perceived at household level?</p> <p>Are gender roles changing? If yes, is women's changing role or increased income valued within the household? Within the community? Does it have an impact on her decision-making and negotiating power?</p> <p>Do women attend or participate in more meetings at community level? Do they speak up?</p> <p>For what purpose is the additional income spent?</p> <p>What are the changes in men's behaviours and attitudes? Do men still take on their responsibilities within the household? Do they get involved in household chores and childrearing to support their wives?</p>

**Table 10.7. Grid for results of the gendered value-chain analysis**

	<b>Gender roles</b>	<b>Gendered access to resources</b>	<b>Gendered control over benefits</b>	<b>Gendered influence on enabling factors</b>
Macro level				
Meso level				
Micro level				

## Tool 3: Gender mapping

Gender mapping aims to make women visible when mapping a value chain. Although women participate in most agricultural value chains, they tend to be invisible. Men are assumed to be the producers, and women are seen as junior partners. Businesses owned by women are often considered as domestic, small-scale, low-technology and informal. Such businesses are often viewed as uncompetitive and irrelevant for development, so are ignored.

### Objectives

- To obtain a gender-sensitive picture of the value chain, the actors involved, their linkages, and the percentages of man and women in each chain segment.
- To gain insights into the differences between men and women in terms of their activities, and their access to and control over resources.
- To identify opportunities for women to upgrade their position.
- To identify constraints and opportunities for women to participate in the value chain as well as analyse differences in power in the value chain governance.

### Used by

Practitioners in participative workshops with male and female value chain actors.

### Methods

**Step 1. Build a hypothesis.** Make a hypothesis on how women participate in the value chain and adjust your mapping route. Although the general perception might be that women don't participate in certain processes or value chain, the key to a good gender analysis is go to the field with an open mind. The gender hypothesis should be based on the following questions:

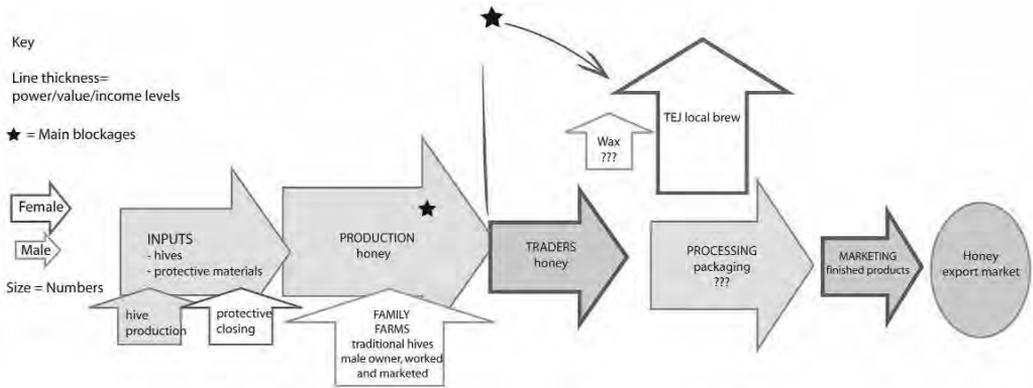
- Where are the women in this value chain? What do they do?
- What and how do you need to map to convince stakeholders and decision makers of the importance and opportunities of women in value chain upgrading?

This gender hypothesis will help you to design the mapping route, looking for the right tools to reveal the gender bias, identifying key stakeholders for interviews or workshop.

**Step 2. Actor mapping.** Make a visual presentation of the value chain, visualizing the main actors (men and women). Invite or interview women leaders and small-scale informal women businesses in order to make an unbiased picture of the value chain. Draw a diagram to reflect this (Figure 10.3).

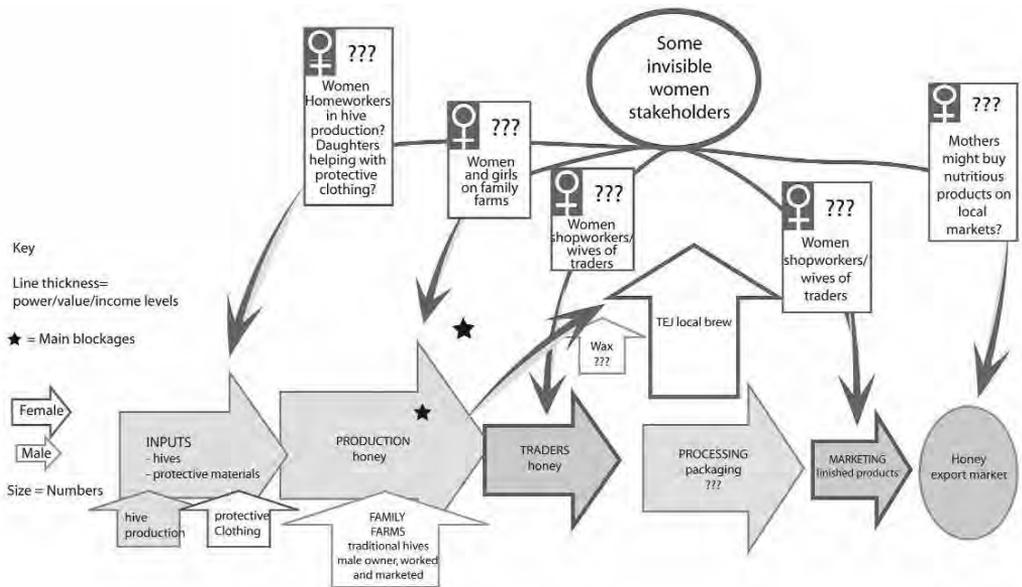
Think about:

- What are the main processes involved in the chain?
- What are the main actors in the chains? Try to differentiate actors according to different typologies, such as:



Source: "Making the strongest links", Linda Majoux, Grania Mackie, ILO

Figure 10.3. Honey in Ethiopia: Example of Step 2 in developing a gendered value chain map



Source: "Making the strongest links", Linda Majoux, Grania Mackie, ILO

Figure 10.4. Honey in Ethiopia: Example of Step 3 in developing a gendered value chain map

**Table 10.8. Roles of women and men in the honey Value Chain in Somoto, Nicaragua**

Link	Activity	Women	Men
<b>Production</b>	Inspection of hives	X	X
	Transhumance	X	X
	Nutrition	X	X
	Control of diseases	X	X
	Rent of land		X
	Preparation of material		X
	Honey harvest	X	X
	Melt the wax	X	X
	Reproduction of hives		X
	Replacement of materials	X	X
	Honey sale	X	X
	Change of the bee queen		X
	Replacement of hives		X
	<b>Collecting and processing</b>	Reception of the honey	
Settle the honey		X	X
Honey bottling		X	X
Labelling of bottles		X	X
Storage of honey		X	X

Source: Cooperative CONCAVEN of Somoto, Seminar Gender and Value Chain organized by Las Abejas, Estelí, 2010.

- Ownership or legal status (individual, household business, informal business, registered enterprise, cooperative, government)
- Size or scale (number of people involved; micro, small or medium-sized enterprise).
- How many are men and how many women? (Use numbers or symbols of different sizes and colours to differentiate men and women).
- How many man and women are members of collective actors (producer organizations, collective processing units)?
- How many men and how many women are employed as workers at the different stages of the value chain?
- What are important actors outside the chain (e.g., business service providers, financial service providers, chain facilitators)?

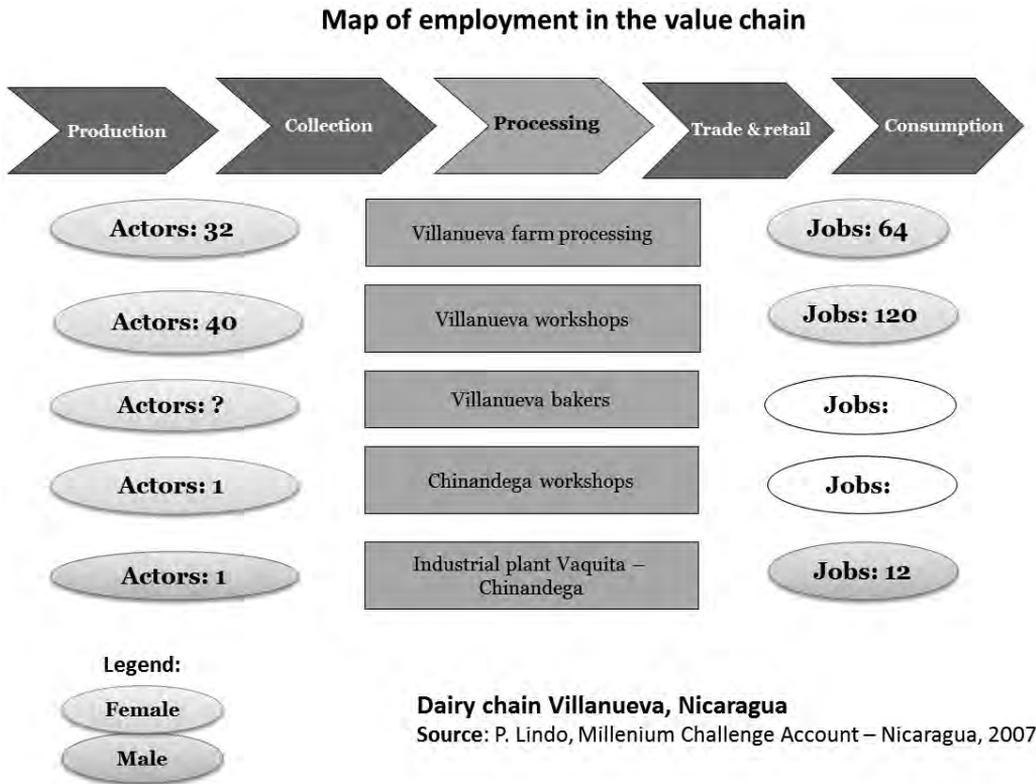


Figure 10.5. Dairying in Villanueva, Nicaragua: Gender of employees

- What are important factors and actors influencing the value chain?

**Step 3. Make invisible women stakeholders visible.** A third step is to make invisible women stakeholders visible: women who are not mapped in the first actor mapping because they are not considered owners of the business, such as wives or daughters in the family business, or women labourers. You can do this by putting coloured cards on the actor mapping (Figure 10.4).

**Step 4. Activity mapping.** Identify which activities in the value chain are done by men, and which by women? Give special emphasis to activities that generate value or improve quality: these may be key to identifying opportunities for empowering women. Table 10.8 gives an example of such a mapping.

**Step 5. Specific gender mapping.** It may be necessary to map the involvement of men and women in more detail in a specific stage in the value chain (Figure 10.5). This diagram shows that a lot of small women-owned domestic milk-processing businesses create many more jobs than the industrial processing unit that processes the same amount of milk as all the small enterprises together. Supporting such industrial plants will have important negative impact on women's employment in this chain.

**Step 6. Identify opportunities and constraints for women.** Analyse the constraints that hamper the competitiveness of women and restrict their inclusion in the value chain. What can reduce these potential limitations? And what are opportunities for economic empowerment of women?

**More information**

Agri-ProFocus Network. Gender in value chains. 4.2: Gender sensitive value chain mapping. <http://genderinvaluechains.ning.com/page/downloads>

Mayoux, L, and G. Mackie. 2009. Making the strongest links: A practical guide to mainstreaming gender analysis in value chain development. International Labour Office, Addis Ababa.

**Table 10.9. Matrix of costs (–) and benefits (+) for dairy producers and processors in Villanueva, Nicaragua**

Actors	Work	Income	Social/market position
<b>Male producer</b>	<p>One more worker is being hired on each beneficiary farm (+)</p> <p>With technical improvements to milking and cattle management, youth of farming families are getting interested in cattle farming (+)</p>	<p>Men have more opportunities to access the dairy value chain programme due to the amount of land they own and the size of their herds (+)</p> <p>More income due to a rise in the price of milk (+)</p>	<p>Leaders of dairy farms don't want to sign contracts for selling quality milk to women processors (–)</p> <p>“They think it's more important to sell to the “La Vaquita” company. They feel more important because they are doing business just between men” (women processors' words) (–)</p>
<b>Female producer</b>		<p>Wives of cattle owners no longer have access to milk for processing on their farm. Negative impact on their income (–)</p>	<p>Women may be affected in their control of income and decision making in the household (–)</p>
<b>Male processor</b>			
<b>Female processor</b>	<p>There will be more workload for female processors given that they have to buy milk in more distant communities (–)</p> <p>Cessation of commercial transactions between milk producers and traditional milk processors puts at risk the jobs of more than 40 cottage industries and a hundred retail sellers of dairy products (–)</p>	<p>“The women used to buy our milk, now there will be a negative impact on them.” (Producers' words) (–)</p>	
<b>Community men and women</b>	<p>The value chain programme gives a minimal support in relation to the number of cattle farms in the municipality (–)</p> <p>Risk of jobs losses if only milk chain ending in industrial processing is supported, leaving out support to artisanal dairy products (–)</p>	<p>“There will be economic destabilization for the women, their families and the municipality. Isn't there a project to avoid this destabilization?” (producers' words) (–)</p>	

Source: Millennium Challenge Account, 2007

## Tool 4: Cost and benefits for men and women

This analysis can be used in the planning phase of value chain intervention or for monitoring and evaluation.

### Objectives

- To assess the possible or actual costs and benefits of the value chain upgrading strategy for different actors in the value chain, men and women, considering relevant dimensions such as work, income, social or market position.
- To create awareness of the gender bias, analysing costs and benefits differentiated by gender, and reflecting on underlying causes and solutions for more gender-equitable outcomes.
- To create awareness in value chain actors of their interdependency; how the upgrading of one actor affect the socio-economic conditions of other actors in their community and value chain.
- To plan actions to overcome negative impact/costs or increase benefits.

### Used by

This is a tool for participatory multi-actor analysis to be used in workshops that bring together different chain actors: men and women producers, processors, retailers, etc. It is important to have a balanced audience of men and women.

### Method

**Step 1: Preparing the workshop.** Design the cost-benefit matrix for analysis (as explained below), deciding on categories on the horizontal axis and including participating and relevant actors on the vertical axis. Differentiate between men and women.

When using this tool in the planning stage: design a participatory presentation of the chain upgrading strategy. For example, get participants to design a map or let them work out a role-play that will allow them to picture planned changes in technology, markets, horizontal and vertical linkage and their implications on people's life.

### Examples of categories in the matrix

- **Time and work.** This refers to changes in workload and work quality, tasks and skills required (skilled versus unskilled, formal education, training) and labour capacity (do people need to be hired or can members of the household or the actual business do it?)
- **Income and control of resources.** This refers to changes in income and control of resources like land, animals, and credit.
- **Social position.** This refers to changes in social position and gender relations as a result of the value chain upgrading.
- **Market position.** This refers to changes in economic power position between value chain actors as a result of chain upgrading strategy.

Categories in the matrix can be adapted to specific situation and needs. Other relevant categories can be health, food security, etc.

**Step 2: Carrying out the workshop with the participants.** Use the matrix for reporting. You can use different colours for positive and negative changes. Black colour is positive impact, blue colour is negative impact. Duration: 2–3 hours.

**Step 3: Systematize the information.** Information obtained in the event should be systematized and the results can be used to improve the chain upgrading strategy, monitor it and assess impacts.

### More information

Agri-ProFocus Network. Gender in value chains. 6.1: Cost-benefit matrix of an intervention strategy. <http://genderinvaluechains.ning.com/page/downloads>

Parker, Rani. 1993. Another point of view: A manual on gender analysis training for grassroots workers. UNIFEM. Adapted by Mieke Vanderschaeghe and Patricia Lindo.

## Tool 5: Democratic decision-making: Household vs producer organization

This tool focuses on the interaction between the producers' organization and the household economy and the need to democratize decision-making processes. Men dominate most important value chains and producers' organizations. But they represent family businesses where women take an important part in production, processing and value addition. It's important that the producers' organization ensure that all family members are informed and in agreement when making key decisions, such as on using a loan, organic certification, investing profits, the choice of services, and so on.

### Objectives

To create awareness on communication and decision-making practices among and within the families of the members of producer organizations related to production and economic issues promoted by the organization.

To reflect on the importance of members taking informed economic decisions in consensus with other household members, rather than on their own.

To decide on what organizations can do to promote communication and democratic decision-making within their members' families.

### Used by

This is a participatory tool to be used in workshops with farming organizations and collective enterprises. As this tool looks into the household dynamic, it is important that both husband and wife are invited to attend the workshop.

### Method

**Step 1.** Explain that participants are going to create a role play. Divide the participants into two or more groups of no more than six or seven people each. Men and women work in separate groups.

**Step 2.** Introduce the scenario for the role play: A cooperative member (man or woman) returns from a cooperative meeting where it was decided to offer loans to the members for carrying out improvements on their farms. The role play will show what happens when the cooperative member returns home from the meeting; how he or she tells his/her family (or not) about the offer of a loan, and how the decision on this proposal is made.

**Step 3.** Each group prepares their role play, making up a short script and sharing out the different roles (member, member's wife/husband, sons, daughters, grandparents, etc.)

**Step 4.** Each group presents their role play to the other groups.

**Step 5.** In a plenary session, the participants reflect on the following questions:

- How were the information and the cooperative's offer of a loan presented to the household members?
- What did you think of the household's communication? Who took part in the decision-making process? Who is listened to? Who takes the final decision?
- How do decisions taken by the cooperative members affect the household economy?
- What can organizations do to improve communication within the family in relation to production and management decisions?

### More information

Agri-ProFocus Network. Gender in value chains. 5.1: Farmers and their organizations. <http://genderinvaluechains.ning.com/page/downloads>

Vanderschaeghe, M., P. Lindo and J. Sánchez. 2009. <http://tinyurl.com/c3auw9p>

## 10.3 Reference guides and websites

### **Downloadable tools and manuals**

All resources listed below can be downloaded from the Agri-ProFocus platform at <http://genderinvaluechains.ning.com> (click on *Resources* then *Manuals*).

#### **ADB: Gender checklist: agriculture**

Asian Development Bank. 2006. <http://tinyurl.com/c2lzdda>

This checklist is designed to assist staff and consultants in implementing ADB's policy and strategic objectives on gender and development. It will guide users through all stages of the project/programme cycle in identifying the main gender issues in the agriculture sector and in designing appropriate gender-sensitive strategies, components, and indicators to respond to gender issues.

#### **Cordaid: Gender in value chains: Manual for gender mainstreaming**

Dulón G., Roxana. 2009. <http://tinyurl.com/yewyybu>

Manual describing how to mainstream gender in local economic development programmes and in the organizations that carry out such programmes. It offers guidance for incorporating gender issues at five stages in development programmes: diagnosis, proposal development, implementation, follow-up and evaluation. It gives advice on how to mainstream gender at four levels in organizations: strategic institutional frameworks and institutional philosophy; objectives, indicators and poli-

cies; strategic operationalization; and personnel training programmes. It also provides nine tools and seven guides on how to implement specific phases in this mainstreaming.

#### **Grow. Sell. Thrive**

Women's economic leadership in agricultural markets. <http://tinyurl.com/cut8ttg>

Various resources for designing programmes for women's economic leadership in agricultural markets, used by Oxfam. Includes institutional commitment and resources; linking gendered household analysis and market analysis; gendered market selection; gendered market mapping; identifying market opportunities and interventions; stakeholder identification and stakeholder engagement strategy; asking questions of stakeholders to gain support for women's economic leadership; facilitating positive change at household level; and measuring impact.

#### **ICRW: Advancing agri-practice: Adding value for women**

International Center for Research on Women (ICRW). <http://tinyurl.com/caekvmc>

Ten presentations from a workshop on gender analysis in agricultural value chains. The workshop aimed to identify how practitioners and researchers can work together to close the information gap on gender and agriculture.

**IFAD: Gender and micro finance**

Mayoux, Linda, and Maria Hartl. 2009. Gender and micro finance: Guide for practitioners. International Fund for Agricultural Development. *www.ifad.org/gender/pub/gender\_finance.pdf*

This guide is intended as an overview of gender issues for rural finance practitioners. It highlights the questions that need to be asked and addressed in gender mainstreaming. It will also be useful to gender experts wishing to increase their understanding of specific gender issues in rural finance. Chapters cover: why gender mainstreaming is important for women; institutional implications of mainstreaming; designing financial products; and rural microfinance, non-financial services, participation and macro-level strategies.

**IFAD: Gender and poverty targeting in market linkages programmes: Toolkit for practitioners**

IFAD. 2002. Gender and poverty targeting in market linkages programmes: Toolkit for practitioners. International Fund for Agricultural Development, Gender Strengthening Programme for Eastern and Southern Africa Division. *www.ifad.org/gender/tools/gender/Toolkit.pdf*

Explains to practitioners what participatory tools are available for rapid market problem diagnosis, socio-economic and gender targeting and – for each tool – how to use it, how to analyse the information, and how to use the findings in designing, implementing and evaluating projects.

**ILO: Making the strongest links**

Mayoux, Linda, and Grania Mackie. 2008. Making the strongest links: A practical guide to mainstreaming gender analysis in value chain development. International Labour Office, Addis Ababa. *http://tinyurl.com/carxewq*

This guide provides a framework and methodology for “gender equitable value chain action learning”, practical examples of gender issues and good practice, details of how the gender framework and methodology can be adapted at different stages of value chain development; a checklist for gender analysis; and diagram tools to use in value chain development.

**ILO: GET ahead for women in enterprise**

Bauer, Susanne, Gerry Finnegan and Nelien Haspels. 2004. Gender and entrepreneurship together: GET ahead for women in enterprise: Training package and resource kit. International Labour Office, Bangkok, Berlin and Geneva. *http://tinyurl.com/bofb2ft*

Training package on promoting enterprise development among poor women who want to start or are already engaged in small-scale business. It focuses on developing women’s confidence, creating a “business mind”, managing people and risks, and grasping opportunities in the business environment of self and others; business support and networking; action planning. It includes sections on the basics on gender and entrepreneurship; the business woman and her environment; the business project; and people, organization and

management. Each section contains several modules and a series of exercises.

### **ILO: Women's entrepreneurship development**

ILO. 2006. Women's entrepreneurship development: Capacity building guide. International Labour Office, Geneva. <http://tinyurl.com/c57lqzw>

Modules cover gender and enterprise, markets, business development services, the enabling environment, building associations and strategic alliances, finance, assessing impact, and action planning. Each module consists of a set of objectives and training materials for use in presentations.

### **SNV and ProPemce: Making gender equality reality in organizations**

Meijer, Sigrid, Patricia Lindo, Jasmina Solis, and Annabella Caldera. 2010. Making gender equality reality in organizations: A methodological guide. SNV and ProPemce (Programme for the promotion of equity through economic growth), Nicaragua. <http://tinyurl.com/bsurwaf>

This manual describes a gender methodology to strengthen the capacities of networks and organizations so that they can provide, more efficiently and effectively, services and products of quality and equality. It describes step by step the ways to ensure gender equality. The methodology is based on the "integrated organizational model" of the Management Development Foundation. Chapters cover external analysis of the organization; internal organizational analysis; and planning and implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning.

### **SNV: Gender mainstreaming in value chain development**

SNV. 2010. Gender mainstreaming in value chain development: Practical guidelines and tools. Corporate Network Agriculture, SNV Netherlands Development Organisation. <http://tinyurl.com/5ruvjr4>

A manual aimed at SNV advisors and local trainers who work on economic development and value chains development. It covers basic concepts and definitions relating to gender and value chain development; gender-sensitive mapping and value chain analysis; and strategic planning: gender sensitive objectives in value chain development.

### **MicroLINKS: Analytical tools for gender in value chains**

<http://tinyurl.com/c53aleo>

Brief description of three approaches: the "integrating gender issues into agricultural value chains" (INGIA-VC) process, the "gender equitable value chain action learning approach" (ILO), and a manual for gender mainstreaming (CEPAC and Cordaid).

### **USAID: Promoting gender in agricultural value chains**

USAID. 2009. Promoting gender equitable opportunities in agricultural value chains handbook. Greater Access to Trade Expansion (GATE) project. United States Agency for International Development, Office of Women in Development. <http://tinyurl.com/dxtr64a>

This handbook presents the "integrating gender issues into agricultural value chains" (INGIA-VC) approach. Written by gender practitioners, it

provides readers with an understanding of agricultural value chains from a gender perspective. It covers how gender issues affect agricultural value chains, a process for analysing gender issues in agricultural value chains, and strategies for addressing gender issues in agricultural value chains.

### **USAID: Gender-sensitive indicators for economic growth/ trade-related activities**

USAID. 2007. <http://tinyurl.com/bu6ygg9>

List of indicators covering: agriculture, environment, transport/infrastructure; governance, labour; export promotion, customs reforms, and small- and medium-sized enterprise support; tourism, e-commerce, and information and communication technology; and services development (health, education)

### **WEMAN: GALS manual 1**

Mayoux, Linda. 2010. Tree of diamond dreams: Visioning and committing to action on gender justice. Manual for field-testing and local adaptation. GALS stage 1. Women's Empowerment Mainstreaming And Networking, Oxfam Novib. <http://tinyurl.com/d95jlh5>

This manual outlines steps for stage 1 of Gender Action Learning System (GALS), a methodology used by Oxfam Novib's Women's Empowerment Mainstreaming And Networking (WEMAN) programme. It presents ideas for a one-day "gender justice event" designed around two core activities: the "gender justice diamond" and the "tree of diamond dreams". It also contains suggestions for adapting the activities as a series of shorter events for field-testing.

### **WEMAN: GALS manual 2**

Mayoux, Linda. 2009. Steering life's rocky road: Gender action learning for individuals and communities. Manual for field-testing and local adaptation. GALS stage 2. Women's Empowerment Mainstreaming And Networking, Oxfam Novib. <http://tinyurl.com/csuqk06>

This manual outlines practical steps for the second stage of the GALS process. Stage 2 focuses on the underlying idea of the "life road journey" where people develop a vision with "milestones", analyse opportunities and constraints and track progress over time as an action learning and change process.

### **World Bank, Gender in agriculture checklist, 2009**

World Bank. 2009. Toolkit for integrating gender-related issues in land policy and administration projects. <http://tinyurl.com/cd5zujo>

A brief checklist of actions and initiatives for projects at the socioeconomic, legal, and institutional levels. This checklist is organized around the four project stages: identification; design and preparation; appraisal; and implementation, supervision, and completion. An expanded toolkit is also bookmarked.

## Useful websites

### Agri-ProFocus: Gender in value chains platform

<http://genderinvaluechains.ning.com/>

This online platform is a place for exchange of experiences and knowledge development for professionals worldwide working on gender in value chains. It contains tools, online resources, links to professionals and online functionality for debate, events and news.

### Agri-ProFocus: Tools and instruments

<http://genderinvaluechains.ning.com/page/toolkit-introduction>

This toolkit (part of the platform above) provides a road map through a wealth of material on gender in value chains. Users are encouraged to suggest additional resources.

### Grupo de trabajo “Cadenas de valor sostenible y Cooperación con el sector privado” de la Red Sectorial (GADeR-ALC)

[www.cadenasdevalorypppp.org/node/8](http://www.cadenasdevalorypppp.org/node/8)

Spanish version of a GIZ manual on value links.

### Commonwealth Secretariat: Gender and trade

[www.thecommonwealth.org/gthomepage/164044/gender\\_and\\_trade/](http://www.thecommonwealth.org/gthomepage/164044/gender_and_trade/)

A web-based resource platform inter-linking research, advocacy and action across the Commonwealth countries to facilitate and promote gender-sensitive trade policies at the national, regional and multilateral levels. It is an initiative of the Commonwealth Secretariat in

partnership with Gender and Trade Initiative (GATI) and the British Department of International Development (DFID).

### Grow. Sell. Thrive

<http://growsellthrive.org/>

Offers a space for dialogue on Oxfam’s and others’ experiences in promoting women smallholders’ economic leadership in agricultural markets.

### ICRW: Agriculture and food security

[www.icrw.org/what-we-do/agriculture-food-security](http://www.icrw.org/what-we-do/agriculture-food-security)

Website of the International Center for Research on Women, which studies how disparities between women and men affect agricultural productivity and food security. This research helps development organizations, policymakers and others find practical ways to enhance women’s roles in agricultural production and trade, thereby improving their incomes and livelihoods.

### IFAD and FAO: Gender-learning community of practice

<http://genderlearning.wikispaces.com/>

“Capacity-building and knowledge management for gender equality” is a joint initiative by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). It aims to enhance regional capacity building and knowledge management on gender, agriculture and rural livelihoods. It builds and shares knowledge related to the integration of a gender perspective into FAO’s and IFAD’s work.

### **IFPRI and ILRI: Gender, Agriculture and Assets Project**

<http://genderassets.wordpress.com/>

A project run by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) to understand gender and asset dynamics in eight agricultural development programmes in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

### **ILRI: Gender and agriculture**

<http://agrigender.wordpress.com/>

Blog reporting on the gender work of the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI).

### **MicroLINKS - USAID, Resources on gender in value chains**

<http://tinyurl.com/cqfbjllh>

Good-value portal with many links to gender in value chains documents, literature, manuals and tools.

### **RUTA-GTZ: Caja de Herramientos con Enfoque de Genero**

<http://ruta.org/toolbox/>

Spanish-language gender toolbox. Sections include selection of value chains, chain analysis, strategy design, implementation, facilitation and evaluation.

### **WEMAN**

[www.wemanglobal.org/1\\_WEMANVision.asp](http://www.wemanglobal.org/1_WEMANVision.asp)

WEMAN is a community-led global process aiming at innovation, learning and advocacy for gender justice in economic interventions and institutions. WEMAN partners facilitate gender action learning with women and men in poor communities. Women and men identify and implement their own individual and collective strategies for increasing women's economic rights.



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Rozemarijn holds a master's degree in international development studies and has research experience in several African countries. At KIT she works mainly on projects concerning gender and agricultural development, and gender and higher education.

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After completing 4 years of secondary school, Paineto trained to become a change agent. He has organized and trained many self-help groups of rural men and women, including on gender issues. He has worked with many NGOs in Uganda to develop training tools for illiterate rural people.

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Shipra holds a master's degree in environmental sciences and has more than ten years of experience in the areas of women empowerment and livelihoods of disadvantaged communities. She has worked with international agencies, state governments, NGOs and grass-roots organizations in India. She has conducted several studies on women's issues and prospects, and has led programmes aimed at enabling women to seize available opportunities. She is committed to working in a rights framework, with a special focus on issues of women's rights.

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Carolina's education has covered exporting, tourism management, labour law, fine arts, coaching and navigation. After working for 5 years on a sailboat in the Mediterranean, she set sail for Peru, where she manages Cynara Peru, an artichoke export business. She is also general manager for Latin America for a new company, Candor-AGS, that trades in artichokes, olive oil and cashew.

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