

GROUP ACTIVITY : HOW TO INFLUENCE CHANGE

ACTIVITY GOAL

Working with imperfect information and in a fluid context, International Development Practitioners identify opportunities to influence actors in a market system with the goal of creating more opportunity for women to participate at multiple points in the value chain.

ROOM SET-UP

Clear a large circle where all participants can move about freely. Surround this with a number of chairs for observers.

PROCESS

Sixteen participants are given eight role cards so that two individuals will work together in each role. The remaining participants are given Observer role cards with instructions.

After each group reads the general background and their specific role card, have the actors gather in a circle with the observers on the outside. Each actor group tries to link up with others who they believe will help them achieve the goal assigned on their role card. The International Project Team will try to bring actors together in new ways so that farmers—both women and men—can access the information, inputs, services, markets, and community support they need to increase their incomes.

Throughout the action, observers will note the interaction and identify the incentives that can be leveraged for change. They will be looking for ways women are able to overcome barriers to their participation in the market system. They will also be observing ways in which change that is introduced can be sustained.

Each observer is given a ‘Cut-in’ card that will provide one chance to join the action. By presenting this card, the observer can switch roles with one of the actors.

After 15–20 minutes of role play, the full group reconvenes and the observers report on what they have seen.

All group members then have a chance to discuss their observations from the role play with a focus on the following:

- Market systems have been around a long time. There are reasons why the current situation exists. Why should actors, particularly those in power, want to change?
- How, without being in direct control, can international project teams stimulate change in the way actors within a market system relate, particularly those changes that will increase opportunity for women?
- What specific actions will the project team take to monitor whether the market systems changes are resulting in equal benefit for women?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

An international development project team had launched a project designed to assist male and female smallholder farmers to increase incomes from cultivation of soybeans.



The team has observed that while men have already received extension services from government extension services, these services do not reliably reach women. Women appear to have very limited access to information about new cultivation practices, new varieties, and new technologies.

They also observe that men and women control separate fields and men expect women to work in their fields before being able to work on their own plots.

There are input supply agents in the regional towns and in some smaller villages. These agents complain that farmers are not buying inputs and would like to expand their reach to more customers.

Microfinance institutions and rural banks are already working with male farmers who are members of organized farmer groups and would like to expand their reach to new clients.

There are several radio stations serving the region and all want to increase advertising revenue.

Companies that process soybeans into edible oil and soy cake for the poultry industry are unable to operate at full capacity because of limited raw material.