**Agro-Enterprise Development**

Agro-enterprise development covers the entire gamut of activities concerning supply of inputs, production, processing, transporting, and marketing of agricultural and related produce. It cuts across various sectors and encompasses the institutions and businesses serving the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors.

**Rationale for Integrating Gender into Agro-Enterprise Development Projects**

One important goal of agribusiness efforts is to improve the productivity of labor. Given that women’s representation in the agricultural labor force is increasing, gender concerns need to be addressed to ensure the continued growth of women’s productivity in this sector. In this context, gender relations (roles, responsibilities, access, and control over resources and services) assume special significance.

**Zambian Success Story in Agribusiness**

In an effort to capitalize on the fact that 80% of women in Africa work the land to produce food, the company provided female small-scale farmers who were organized into clubs with inputs to grow both maize and sorghum into its program. As this was not found as profitable, a value-added product was considered. A mill was contracted to process maize into mealie meal, which had a good local market. The company then integrated production, processing and marketing, which guaranteed farmers an assured market and competitive prices.

The company next planned to diversify into natural colorants from paprika and marigold, for which there is a market as artificial colors have been banned in many countries. It developed a model in which production is handled by small farmers who are provided seeds, fertilizers, technical assistance and extension, and are paid in dollars. Processing, super-processing and marketing are handled by the company.

An association of out-growers, 50% of whom are women, produces maize and paprika. In addition to maize seeds, farmers were given 4000kg of paprika seeds, US$300,000 as credit loans, and US$170,000 in technical assistance. In the first season, 2,000MT of paprika and 14,000MT of maize were harvested. The volumes are expected to double from the second season onwards.

The program has had some significant impact on those involved in the rural areas. For example, civil servants (teachers, nurses, etc.) have become involved in the program because they are able to earn money to sustain themselves instead of waiting for their salaries from the capital city. Some farmers under the paprika project have been able to build better houses, others have bought bicycles, and others have even been able to purchase second-hand vans.

**Source:** Mwanamwambwa, C. 1999. “Role and impact of women entrepreneurs—the case of an agri-food enterprise in Zambia,” in the CTA seminar on “The economic role of women in rural and agricultural development: the promotion of income generating activities,” Athens, Greece.

**Gender Relations in Agricultural Export in Kenya**

The gender impact of agricultural production and export of French beans in Kenya have recently drawn people’s attention. In a particular region in Kenya, vegetable growing traditionally has been a women’s activity. However, as the export of vegetables become more lucrative, women find themselves losing out to men.

A research paper that analyzed the “gendered” impacts of vegetable export in Kenya pointed to the following:

- **Women’s loss of control over land traditionally given to them upon marriage.** As men start to get involved in vegetable production, they appropriate lands that women use for household food production and to local produce sale markets, thus eroding women’s condition.
- **Inequitable division of labor—**Even when men are the producers of French beans, women are the primary laborers, thus adding to women’s workloads.
- **Control over income by women—**Although export vegetables are grown on women’s land, the income generated from the crops is controlled by men as they sign the contracts.

The research also highlights the need for re-evaluation of the impact by the aid and donor organizations, in the light of promoting export-oriented horticulture, to assess:

1) Whether the benefits will be shared between household members
2) Whether the increase in financial well-being is worth the input from all family members and a significant increase in workload by women and children
3) Whether the activities are sustainable for small producers, considering the international market variability
4) Whether the intensive cultivation of French beans on a continuous basis is environmentally sustainable.

## Gender differences in access to information
- Linkages between big agro-enterprises and small producers, especially women
- Differential access by sex to markets and services
- Women's participation in trade and producers organizations

## Differential access by sex to markets and services
- Men's and women's roles in agro-processing and trade
- Opportunities and barriers for women's entry in agro-processing and trade
- New trends replacing women's home-based enterprises and trade

## Opportunities and constraints for women's employment in agro-enterprises
- Opportunities and barriers for women's employment in agro-enterprises
- Barriers to women's participation in farm-business linkages

## Note for Task Teams
- Given the importance of agro-enterprises for women, assess opportunities for women at the outset of the project.

## Checklist of Gender-Related Issues and Activities during the Project Cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification and Preparation</th>
<th>Design and Appraisal</th>
<th>Implementation and Supervision</th>
<th>Implementation Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✅ Gender differences in access to information</td>
<td>✅ Strengthening market information systems for male and female SMEs</td>
<td>✅ Assess and improve participation of women in trade and producers organizations</td>
<td>✅ Better knowledge about high value added products and marketing among women and men entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Linkages between big agro-enterprises and small producers, especially women</td>
<td>✅ Strengthening roles of women in trade and policy and participatory planning</td>
<td>✅ Improve facilities for women in markets</td>
<td>✅ Increased income from products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Differential access by sex to markets and services</td>
<td>✅ Women's participation in trade and producers organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Suggested Gender-Related Indicators for Agro-Enterprise Development Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✷ Amount of funding allocated to provide assistance to men and women in agro-enterprise</td>
<td>✷ Effective participation of women in agro-enterprise and trade activities</td>
<td>✷ Improvement in women's income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ Amount of funding for market infrastructure development and improved access to markets</td>
<td>✷ Improvement in women’s employment levels—reduction in wage differentials and skills gaps</td>
<td>✷ Overall improvement in rural well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ Strengthening of producers and trade organizations.</td>
<td>✷ Increase in women's participation and leadership in producers and trade organizations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>