



**The Role of Mainstreaming Gender in Agricultural Research and
Development and Its Contribution to Feeding Our region in the
Twenty First Century**

**A Paper Presented at the First ASARECA General Assembly Held
14th-16th December 2011 in Entebbe, Uganda**

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15/12/2011

Abstract

This paper seeks to highlight one of the major contradictions bedeviling efforts to feed the ECA region in the present times; whereas the gendered management system of food production in particular and agricultural production in general has not changed much over the last century, the bio-physical production system has undergone tremendous change. As a result, there has been increasing demand for food without commensurate increases in food production. Unfortunately, while the deteriorating bio-physical production system that has depressed food production has evidently received research and policy attention, the static gendered management system has received scanty attention. This is because the gendered management system is part of the broader structure of gender relations that are so entrenched in the formal and informal institutions in society that they are treated as givens or “natural”. Hence, agricultural and social scientists and policy makers rarely recognize the challenges posed by the gendered management system to food production.

Yet, evidence abounds that the gendered management system entitles males with ownership and control of resources and decision making powers in the production, exchange and consumption of food more than it does the females. Paradoxically, the responsibility for food provisioning within smallholder farming systems in the ECA region lies predominantly with females. In here lies the challenge for feeding the ECA region from a gender perspective. For those onto whom custom bestows the responsibility for food production are less entitled by the same custom. Asymmetries in males’ and females’ entitlements are the foundations for gender inequalities not only in the agricultural sector but in the wider sectors of society. Therefore, if feeding the ECA region is to be realized, we cannot continue with “business as usual” without addressing the constraints and challenges embedded within the static gendered management system of food production.

These constraints and challenges can best be addressed through mainstreaming gender in agricultural research and development. Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself but a strategy, an approach and a means to achieve the goal of gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities in policy development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of policies, programmes and projects. It is in this context that we examine the role of mainstreaming gender in

agricultural research and development and its contribution to feeding our region in the twenty first century.

Introduction

Agriculture in general and food production in particular within the ECA region have near similar bio-physical production and management traits. Bio-physical production traits comprise of crops, pastures, animals, soil and climate, together with certain physical inputs and outputs. Management traits refer to people, values, goals, knowledge, resources, monitoring opportunities and decision making processes within the agricultural sector. Specifically, the ECA region exhibits the following bio-physical traits; less than 2 hectares are cultivated per household, rudimentary tools (hand hoe, axe and panga) are used in cultivation, there is cultivation of a mixed portfolio of crops and rearing of animals and overwhelming reliance on indigenous planting and stocking materials.

With regard to management traits, agricultural/food production in much of the region is of the smallholder type and organised within and around the household. There is overwhelming reliance on household labour and production largely for household consumption. In addition, smallholder agriculture and rural ways of life are intimately intertwined. Rural ways of life are an embodiment of the cultures and values of a people. Thus, agricultural knowledge, skills and practices are informally passed on from generation to generation through socialization processes alongside other social and economic skills (the productive, reproductive, household maintenance etc) that are deemed essential for societal existence and continuity in general and for rearing children into becoming responsible adults in particular. Other forms of socialization include inculcating into children the acceptable cultural/ethnic specific behavior, attitudes and life skills. Responsible adulthood is in most cases understood as ability to raise and cater for a family, within the structures of subsistence existence. Food self sufficiency is the pride of subsistence existence, for market purchases of food are frowned upon as characteristic of the lazy. In fact, the eligibility of marriage candidates in many rural communities within the region was and is still weighed alongside levels of farm level industriousness and subsequently, food self sufficiency in the natal homes of the potential candidates. That is why up to today, there are very few smallholder farmers in the region who cultivate one crop largely for the market.

Small holder subsistence agriculture including food production is therefore but one of the many life skills and practices that characterise rural life, living and livelihoods in the ECA region. And just like most life skills and practices are determined by cultural values, cultural values also do determine processes of food production, exchange and consumption. One of the cultural values that permeate the entire ECA region, like in other societies all over the World, is gender. This

implies that the values attached to agriculture which are simultaneously part and parcel of the general values of living and livelihoods are also gendered. Gender not only sets specific expectations, obligations and responsibilities of males and females in food production but also determines their entitlements to resources requisite for earning livelihoods including those required for food production. Implicitly, gender constitutes one of the major traits within the management system of food production.

Gendered Entitlements to Food Production and Consumption Patterns

In much of the ECA region, smallholder food production is carried out as a “way of life” within structures of gender and household organisation which are themselves a concatenation of a complexity of norms, beliefs and practices that govern individual household members’ roles, rights and entitlements in food production, exchange and consumption. Gender and household organisation remain fundamental principles governing the division of labor and determining expectations, obligations, responsibilities and entitlements of males and females within and beyond households. Gender and household organisation for example determine the economic and social roles to be played by men and women, boys and girls, of which, in rural households, participation in food production is just one of the many. Gender and household organisation also determine the entitlements and constraints in time, mobility and resources that each experiences in performing this role (Grieco 1997). The differing entitlements and constraints each gender experiences arises from the differing socio-interactional and material entitlements accorded to each gender by society.

Sen (1981) defined entitlements as sets of alternative commodity/service bundles that a person can command in a society using the totality of rights and opportunities that s/he faces. A person’s “entitlement set” is the full range of goods and services that s/he can acquire by converting his/her “endowments” through “entitlement mappings”. Endowments are those assets, resources, including labour power that somebody already commands or has access to while entitlements are the assets that somebody can within certain contexts produce under circumstances determined by prevailing legal and customary regimes. Through the application of endowments, entitlements are created or transferred.

Entitlement sets typically comprise any of, all or a combination of the following:

- trade-based entitlements whereby one is entitled to own what one obtains by trading something that one owns with a willing party, for example selling one's non food agricultural produce to purchase food;
- production-based entitlements whereby one is entitled to own what one gets by organising production (for instance of food) using resources one owns for example land, or resources hired/rented from willing parties under agreed conditions of exchange;
- own-labour based entitlements whereby one is entitled to one's own labour power, and thus to the trade-based and production-based entitlements arising from one's labour power;
- inheritance and transfer entitlements whereby one is entitled to own what is willingly bequeathed to him/her by another who legitimately owns it; and,
- social-interactional entitlements in form of support, recognition, encouragement, high expectations held of someone by significant others, for example parents, teachers, spouses, employers, extension workers, governments, organisations, communities etc all of which foster confidence, optimism, control over one's own life and the power to make rational choices.

Entitlements further define the relationships between people and the commodities/services which they need to acquire (or to have access to) in order to be able to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives. In entitlement analysis, a person's command over commodities is said to depend first on the person's position in society (what their occupation or class is, what they produce, where they live, how much land they own, what skills they possess, what authority they command etc,) and second, on the rules which legitimise claims over commodities/services. Since a person's entitlements depend partially on their position in society, entitlement analysis can introduce a range of social, economic, cultural, and political factors that determine entitlements to food too.

According to Sen (1981), a person who has land, labour power and other resources which together make up his/her endowments can produce a bundle of food that will be his/hers. Or by selling labour, s/he can get a wage and with that buy

commodities, including food. Alternatively, s/he can grow non food crops and sell them to buy food and other commodities. The combined sets of all such available commodity bundles in a given economic situation are the exchange entitlement of his/her endowment. However, entitlements to such resources is governed by rules and norms that are distinguished and structured by gender, age, marital status and other axes of socio-economic inclusion and exclusion. Gasper (1993) concludes that that beyond legal/customary rights, effective access to resources within institutions typically depends not only on formal and informal rules but also on particular relationships with sources of authority and influence, most of which are gendered.

Females' lesser entitlements are exhibited most within farming systems where land is the most productive resource, is the major form of wealth and the main source of livelihood for the majority of the people. Ownership of land also facilitates access to credit, membership in co-operatives and access to new farm information and technology (Ardayfio-Schandorf 1997). Yet, due to the gendered entitlements, males own 84% while females own only 16% of titled land in Uganda, for example (Sebina-Zziwa et al 2004). As a result, females' access to credit was less than 1% as of 1993 while their access to extension services and technology is negligible (World Bank 1993). Paradoxically, more females than males work in subsistence agriculture contributing 80% of the labour in food crop and 52% of the labour in cash crop production (UNICEF 1994). UNDP (1998) adds that females carry out 70%-80% of the agricultural work such as planting, weeding, watering, harvesting, processing and storage of food.

Females' inordinate contribution to agricultural work notwithstanding, their control of the proceeds of their labour is low; females sold only 30% of the food crops and controlled only 9% of the cash crop proceeds. Joint spouses' involvement in decision making with regard to the use of funds generated from agricultural production was 12% in food crops and 7% for cash crops (UNICEF 1989). Thus, females obtain less income than males from agricultural production which further places acute labour constraints on females in view of their limited capacity to hire labour due to cash shortages (Kasente 1998; Lockwood and Whitehead 1998). This has led to a significant reliance on child labour which acts as a substitute for hired labour in females' farming enterprises.

Besides the aforementioned constraints to agricultural production arising from overloads on females' labour time, societal norms that bestow onto males the power to control the proceeds of household production further serve as disincentives to females' enhanced agricultural production. Madanda (1997) cited cases where females were more secure in their marriages with less food cultivation

and insecure with higher production. For their male spouses used the proceeds from increased production to build new houses and in purchasing new bicycles (status symbols in rural areas). With new found status, the males married more wives to the chagrin of their spouses. Thus, females rather risked food insecurity than insecure marriages through deliberately cultivating less. In other words, marital insecurity could fuel deliberate livelihood insecurity.

Women's weaker property rights in land and other resources and a rigid gender division of labour have been reported to account for the limited gains from attempts at agricultural commercialization to women in Africa (Ardayfio-Scandorf 1997). There is widespread documentation of gendered conflicts that arise from agricultural specialisation especially production of cash crops (Blackden 1993; Bryceson 1995; Dolan 2001; Ongile 1999; Whitehead 1981). In this scholarship, men are not only found to appropriate traditional cash crops but also the non-traditional ones once the crops become lucrative. For instance, Dolan (2001) reported that French beans were traditionally women's horticultural property in Meru, Kenya. But as they became increasingly lucrative, men began to usurp either the land allocated for, or the income derived from export horticultural production. As a result, female control was eroded as tensions resonated over male and female property rights and the labour contributions to household subsistence. Men's appropriation of cash crops was attributed to men's ownership and control of land, which gave them powers over household production. It was further attributed to patriarchal social systems. These forces are also said to have contributed to the weak supply response of African agriculture to export opportunities (Joekes 1999). Evidence that farm output from a given quantity of household labour is less than the maximum that could be produced has been adduced in Burkina Faso (Smith and Chavas 1999; Udry 1996), Tanzania (Tijabuka 1994) and Zambia (Wold 1997).

Deteriorating Bio-Physical Production System of Food Production

Food production in the ECA region is stifled with challenges arising from population increases, land fragmentation, climate change, crop failure, deteriorating pastures, animal diseases, decreasing soil fertility etc. Droughts are becoming the norm in parts of North Western Kenya and North Eastern Uganda while floods are devastating many agricultural livelihoods in Eastern Uganda. Weather patterns in the region have become unpredictable while yields in most parts of Uganda are on the decline while.

Opportunity Costs of Food Production

The female specific obligations for food production in the ECA region pose several opportunity costs to women and girls including the rights to education and skills and economic rights foregone by girls and women in producing food. Studies abound that indicate that Non-traditional Agricultural Export (NTAE) crops have negative impact on young girls' use of time in Uganda (Elson and Evers 1996). In the context of vanilla production, extra demands on women's labour time was transferred to their daughters. Pollination by hand at critical stages in the growth cycle was often undertaken by girls at the expense of their schooling. Elson and Evers (1996) also found that NTAE damaged children's health and nutrition; increasing workloads of women led to a decline in breastfeeding and worsening child care practices and food insecurity was intensified, as families sold food to raise cash for basic family expenses. But the evidence is mixed. Another study in selected villages of two Ugandan districts (Kasente et al 2002) found that farmers were not compromising food security in response to NTAE incentives. However, this study too found that men controlled over 90 per cent of the income from vanilla and that women were more likely than men to spend their income on household needs, especially food. Kasente et al (2002) further highlighted factors affecting alternative choices of women for remunerated labour. For example, only older women with no small children undertook marketing activities that required women to be mobile while independent agricultural activities were only undertaken by women with sons, etc.

Competing Demands for Land, Labor and Other Resources Used in Food Production

The overlap amongst, and close integration of the agricultural and domestic roles and responsibilities in rural households results into competing demands for resources required for food production (World Bank 2005; Ellis et al 2006; Manyire 2008). The boundary between agricultural and household responsibilities is very fluid. Amongst small holder subsistence farmers in region, agriculture is regarded as both a social and an economic activity. For females, small holder farming is largely construed more as part and parcel of their social roles within households, in addition to reproductive, caretaker and household management roles. This is because in most cultures in Uganda, food security especially household own provisioning is largely regarded as females' responsibility. The overlap amongst the agricultural and domestic roles and responsibilities of females in rural communities is well captured in the lyrics of a Luganda traditional song which goes "*nfunda nomuubbi ngazaala, nga'lima, nag'yaniliza nabagenyi*" which translates into "I would rather prefer a homely woman but who produces children, cultivates and welcomes

visitors". Alternately, for males, agriculture is perceived more as part of their economic roles that should earn households income (Manyire 2008). In some communities like the Tooro of Western Uganda, some women even pester their spouses to leave the village and subsequently agriculture, and go to Kampala (or other urban areas) to earn incomes.

Females therefore usually undertake all their social roles including "agriculture" simultaneously while males focus their energies on the economic role of earning income. Where returns from agriculture are low or non-existent, males end up leaving all agricultural undertakings to females as the males seek income earning opportunities outside agriculture, for example in brick laying, sand mining, stone quarrying, *boda boda* riding etc. Where these opportunities are minimal, men may just idle around doing literary nothing! It is these variations in perceptions of agriculture that constitute the foundations for the gender differences in opportunities and constraints in time, mobility and resources faced by males and females, respectively, in the agricultural sector.

Exclusion and/or Unfavorable Inclusion of Women and Poor Men in Food Production Policies, Programs and Projects at National and Local Levels

There is growing documentation and increasing awareness in the ECA region in general and in Uganda in particular of the practical limitations to women's participation in development processes (inordinate roles, responsibilities and workloads, little control of, and access to resources and existing power relations that prohibit participation and benefit). However, what if less understood and articulated limitations on women's voice. The limitations relate to social exclusion and unfavourable inclusion of segments in society from the development process. Sen (2000) defined social exclusion as a form of inability to do things that one has reason to want to do. Unfavourable inclusion manifests in form of deeply "unequal" terms of social participation for instance in the credit and land markets, extension services, on-farm trials and field demonstrations, in the exchange markets, or even in the rural-labour market (Kelles-Vitanen 1998). Because social exclusion and unfavourable inclusion are deeply institutionalized in society, there are inadequacies within development policies, programmes and projects in appreciation of the forms of social exclusion and unfavourable inclusion that prevent certain categories of people from effectively participating in development processes.

The tendency within agricultural production policies, programmes and projects is to assume that promotion of the participation of both men and women revolves around similar mechanisms which automatically promote women's interests. This is

misleading because the assumption does not recognize the obstacles posed by the gendered nature of institutions within which the development policies, programmes and projects are designed and implemented and within which the targeted men and women farmers operate. Baden (2000) defines institutions as the formal and informal rules and constraints which shape social perceptions of needs and roles while organisations administer these rules and respond to needs. Institutions create the context for organizations such as those in agricultural do operate. Institutions further tend to socially exclude and, or unfavourably include certain categories of people from opportunities for advancement.

This explains why the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) in Uganda have failed to operationalise its “Poverty and Gender Strategy for the Delivery of Improved Agricultural Advisory Services” (Republic of Uganda 2003). Yet the NAADS, through the Ugandan Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) is cognizant of the gender dimensions of poverty in Uganda. It is explicitly stated that

“operationalising the PMA will require special considerations to gender issues. All interventions must be gender responsive and gender focused such that both men and women are included. Intervention planning and implementation should carefully consider men’s and women’s participation, roles, responsibilities and workloads, as well as control of, and access to resources and existing power relations that may prohibit participation and benefit” (Republic of Uganda 2000 pg 9).

Therefore, the tendency within agricultural production policies, programmes and projects to assume that promotion of the participation of both men and women revolves around similar mechanisms which automatically promote women’s interests is problematic. For it is not clear how participation of poor men and women is expected to lead to articulation of their interests in ways which can influence institutional rules and practices (effectiveness) and consequently lead to making of decisions about resource use that lead to poverty reduction in the material sense (impact).

For conventional “gender participation” approaches do not do not address perceived male resistance and silencing, internalized subordination and difficulty of expressing women’s interests within existing frame works of traditional development practices. For poor women and some men, the sense of powerlessness and exclusion is a product not just of their gender subordination but also of interlocking forms of exclusion simultaneously linked to their socio-economic status. This is what Sen (2000) described as analysis of deprivation of capability and subsequent experience of poverty. Under this form of analysis, focus shifts from *distributional* issues raised in traditional analyses of poverty (the lack of resources at the disposal of an individual or household) to the role of relational features; inadequate social participation; lack of social integration and lack of power in deprivation of capability and experience of poverty (Room 1999). Moulaert (1995) further points out that such exclusions and unfavourable inclusions acting singularly or in various combinations may ultimately evolve local sub-cultures within groups which limit and undermine the capacity of the affected people to take up opportunities for improving their socio-economic wellbeing.

Time Poverty

Variations in gender roles and responsibilities constitute a major hindrance to food production in the ECA region (World Bank 2005; Republic of Uganda 2002). Women's significant, yet understated roles in agricultural production and their pivotal position in household management and welfare (food preparation, health and hygiene, reproduction, child care and socialisation) are central to the region’s agricultural development and social survival. The different structural roles of men and women in the agricultural sector are coupled with their equally different and skewed roles in the household management and the boundaries between agricultural and household activities tend to overlap (Gelb 2001). What particularly characterizes women's roles, in contrast to those of men, is that they must carry out these roles simultaneously, not sequentially. This is evident not only in the UPPAP/PPA2, which amply documents the extent of women's labour overloads and their very long working hours, but also in the harsh choices and trade-offs that women inevitably have to make because of the simultaneous competing claims on their (but not men’s) labour time. The UPPAP/PPA2 highlighted the problem of women’s “over-burden” and identified the strong imbalance in the gender division of labour as one of the main contributors to poverty. A comparison of time use for women and men in rural Uganda, revealed that poor women work between 12 and 18 hours per day, with a mean average of 15 hours, compared with an average male working day of approximately 8-10 hours. The main source of discrepancy is women’s heavier commitment to their reproductive roles (child rearing/ care of family members) and the additional responsibility for the family food security. This

is coupled with the requirements for water and energy provisioning. The “overloads” of women is a key component of both individual and household production, in large part because of the disproportionate cost borne by women of reproduction and household management responsibilities. As they carry out their multiple tasks, women, much more than men, must work in the face of severe constraints, many of which are deep-rooted and systemic in nature, and are ground in social institutions and modes of household organization. Understanding the time constraint and its implications, and moving to reduce or eliminate it, is fundamental if food production is to be enhanced in the ECA region.

In addition to their prominence in agriculture and household management and welfare, women bear the brunt of domestic tasks: processing food crops, providing water and firewood, and caring for the elderly and the sick. This is the second component of women’s labour overloads’, their “double workday,” as revealed in the UPPAP/PPA2 analysis (Republic of Uganda 2002), as well as in numerous other studies in Uganda (Manyire 2008; Nayenga 2008). Analysis of how men and women and boys and girls spend their time is critical to understanding both the “overloads” of women and how this affects agricultural production. Fetching water, collecting fuel wood, and pounding grain involve arduous physical work and must be performed daily, in addition to agricultural and other productive work. The time and effort required for these tasks, in the almost total absence of even rudimentary domestic technology, is staggering. The focus on women’s overburden in the UPPAP recognized explicitly that agricultural and household economies are intertwined, and that this has critical implications for both the allocation of labour and its productivity across the full range of tasks that disproportionately fall to women. Some specific negative effects of time constraints were identified in a number of key areas, in a way that insightfully captures the cross-cutting nature of this issue (Republic of Uganda 2002). For example, women’s ability to produce enough food for the family is compromised by their heavy workload.

Glick et al (2004) do provide descriptive data on the respective workloads of men and women, boys and girls, in both domestic and market tasks, separately for rural and urban households. The data show that women spend between four and five times as many hours as men on domestic tasks, while girls do about 3/5 as much again as boys. Rural men offset this differential by spending about 1.3 times as much time as women on market work, while rural women’s work week is about 1/3 longer than that of men. Case examples from the transport, water, and energy sectors further illustrate the marked gender differences in time allocation, reflecting in turn important structural dimensions of, and rigidities in the gender division of labour. They confirm and reinforce the UPPAP findings not only that women are

overburdened, but that they indeed have by far the greater of the burden for “meeting family needs.”

Gender specific domestic overloads further affect more female than male children. Girls usually perform more domestic chores at home than boys do, typically fetching water, caring for younger siblings and helping with food production and preparation to the detriment of their academic achievement and persistence. Although exceptions exist, rural agricultural households seldom depend so heavily on boys because girls tend to be better substitutes for their mothers than boys are for their fathers (Manyire 1998; Herz et al 1991). Therefore, the greater the access to resources and ownership of assets by women (Valdivia 2001), the more empowered they could be to undertake their multiple roles within farming systems (Agarwal 1994).

The Case for Mainstreaming Gender in Agricultural Research and Development and Its Contribution to Feeding Our region in the Twenty First Century

Introduction to Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself but a strategy, an approach, a means to achieve the goal of gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities in policy development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of policies, programmes and projects. In 1997, the United Nations Economic and Social Council defined the concept of gender mainstreaming as follows:

“...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.”

Gender mainstreaming includes actions aimed at:

- Undertaking a gender analysis with a view to identifying inequalities between men and women which need to be addressed;

- Providing equal opportunities to all and carrying out gender specific actions wherever inequalities are pronounced;
- Starting a process of institutional change;
- Giving girls and women a voice;
- Carrying out gender budgeting;
- Undertaking participatory gender audits.

Gender Analysis

Gender analysis is a systematic tool used in examining the social and economic differences between women and men. It looks at their specific activities, conditions, needs, access to and control over resources, as well as their access to development benefits and decision making. It studies these linkages and other factors in the larger social, economic, political and environmental contexts. The findings of the gender analysis are used to inform strategic planning of any interventions. Gender analysis and planning are also required for the development and implementation of specific measures to promote equality of opportunity and treatment between male and female workers. All policies and programmes, whether at the macro, sectoral or micro levels, need to engage in gender analysis and planning as a means not only for achieving gender equality but as a contribution to realizing their overall goals. Gender analysis entails first and foremost, collecting sex-disaggregated data (i.e., data broken down by sex) and gender sensitive information about the concerned population. Gender analysis is the first step in gender sensitive planning for promotion of gender equality. Gender analysis is not confined to identifying differences. More importantly, it recognizes the politics of gender relations and the adjustments needed to be undertaken by institutions to attain gender equality. It looks at the inequalities between women and men, boys and girls, asks why they exist, and suggests how the gap can be narrowed. Gender analysis entails five key variables:

- The division of labour between men and women, boys and girls;
- The different needs of men and women, boys and girls;
- The sex-based division of access to, and control over resources and benefits;

- Opportunities and constraints in the social and economic environment; and,
- The capacity of institutions to promote equality between men and women, boys and girls there-in.

The Practice of Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is akin to blood transfusion for it is integral to all development decisions: it concerns the staffing, procedures and culture of development organisations as well as their programmes; and, it is the responsibility of all staff. Because of its integral nature, gender mainstreaming undoubtedly necessitates major attitudinal changes and adjustments in working methods of organisations at all levels. The changes and adjustments are required not only to address why women and some poor men lack resources but also why they may not even access and utilize resources targeted towards them (Razavi and Miller 1995).

In this regard, Gaynor and Jennings (2004) noted that effective gender mainstreaming requires major institutional changes at policy, organizational and resource allocation levels. At policy level, Gaynor and Jennings (2004) reported that gender equality commitments should be explicitly backed by requisite resources that translate into programme implementation. At organizational level, organizational norms, procedures and staff require a conscious sensitivity to a culture of gender equality. At resource allocation levels (both human and financial), apart from ensuring that gender sensitivity and specific activities to promote gender equality are covered by the programme budget, staff also need to have access to process funds which can be used to sponsor research to support gender mainstreaming as well as capacity building activities.

While gender sensitivity has been included in many policy documents in several countries, translating this principle into actual, realistic and practical activities by the different stakeholders involved in the implementation of the policies remains a challenge. As earlier noted, this challenge arises from inadequacies in appreciation of the forms of social exclusion and unfavourable inclusion that prevent women and other categories of vulnerable people from effectively participating in development processes. This makes the case for mainstreaming gender in agricultural research and development if we are to feed the ECA region in the twenty first century.

The Relevance of Gender Mainstreaming in Food Production

Gender and smallholder food production mutually interact to produce different sets of opportunities and constraints that influence the abilities of different categories of men and women and boys and girls to participate in food production, consumption

and exchange. Opportunities include access to, ownership and control of assets like land, oxen, ploughs, labour, income, knowledge of modern agronomic practices, extension services, yield enhancing technologies, credit, capital, markets etc. Constraints manifest in form lack of access to, ownership and control of the aforementioned assets. Constraints further arise from competing demands for labour time especially in reproductive roles (child raising and care) and domestic roles (home maintenance, food processing and preparation, fuel and water collection, care of the sick and elderly etc). Furthermore, constraints manifest in form of low levels of optimism, confidence, impetus and active agency to undertake certain forms of agricultural production, for example production of high value crops, which may be deemed a preserve of certain gender particularly males or farmers of higher socio-economic status. There are also constraints manifesting in form of lack of self-confidence, impetus and active agency to seek extension advice, credit, high yield varieties and even certain markets which could again be deemed a preserve of certain gender or farmers of higher socio-economic status.

However, although gendered entitlements in agriculture tend to favour males more than females with respect to opportunities and further constrain females more than males, caution should be taken not to lump all males and all females into homogenous categories. This is because the influence of gendered entitlements on food production, consumption and exchange is not a given. Rather, gendered entitlements are mediated via several socio-institutional phenomena, which either mitigate or exacerbate their (gendered values') influence on different types of males' and females' participation in agriculture. For example, gendered entitlements in male headed households may not be similar to those in female or child headed households. For instance, women from female headed households tend to be more economically active compared to their counterparts in male headed households because they are not dependent on males theoretically or in practice. Even amongst similar household types, for example the female headed, the cause of female headedness may present different types of gendered values. For instance, widows may experience different sets of gendered values compared to the divorced and/or the never married. Widows tend to have more access to resources like land, especially if they have adult sons, compared to the divorced, for example. Younger men and women may experience different forms of gendered entitlements compared to older men and women. And in households with multiple forms of livelihoods (smallholder farming, trading, fishing, formal sector employment, remittances etc), the sets of gendered values therein may be different from those in households where there are only one or two dominant forms of livelihoods. Further, the nature, manifestation and influence of socio-institutional phenomena in producing different sets of gendered values that influence food production is not

similar across all individual males and females, households, communities, ethnicities and geographical regions the ECA region. This is due to variations in cultures, gender ideologies, levels of subscription to the ideologies and material conditions of agricultural production exhibited at individual, household, community, ethnic and regional levels.

Mainstreaming Gender Entitlements to Food Within Agricultural Research Institutions

The centrality of gender in food production amongst smallholder farmers in the ECA region makes it crucial that it is mainstreamed in the conceptualisation, design, execution, dissemination and utilization of agricultural research and development. This can be attained through the following stages. First and foremost in mainstreaming gender in agricultural research and development is conscious integration of the “management component” of farming systems in the conceptualisation, design, execution, dissemination and utilization of agricultural research and development initiatives. For it is the management component that organizes the bio physical production component of farming systems. .

Often, the physical science agricultural research and development initiatives tend to regard the management component as a given/constant thereby placing more emphasis on the “bio physical production component of farming systems; “efficiency of tools, fertility, maturity periods, resistance to drought and pests, yields etc”. For example, rather than conceptualising a tractor or ox-plough solely in terms of acres of land ploughed per hour, agricultural research should further seek to understand the relations between the acreage ploughed and human values. For example, acreage ploughed for who (individuals/households), by who, for what purposes (food/cash crop or both), with what impact or effects (positive/negative), on who (individuals/households), how (reduced/increased labour time, improved/reduced/no change in welfare), why (gendered values, nature of division of labour, distribution of resources, entitlements etc)?

Second is the need for conscious and sub conscious awareness that smallholder farmers are not homogeneous but are differentiated by gender and other social institutional phenomena (how do males and females relate between and amongst each other, including relations between agricultural scientists and farmers of similar and different gender). It is equally important to be conscious of the fact that different cultural backgrounds mould into humans different values, meanings and mindsets which lead to different reactions to similar stimuli: for example, in Uganda, (and this is typically stereotypic) a Muhima will react to a cow by wishing to rear it; a

Karamojong by wishing to rustle it; a Mukiga by wishing to slaughter and eat it; and a Muganda by wishing to sell it. Thus, since agriculture is practiced based on varying human values, there are no “one size fits all” scenarios. Care must be taken to collect and disaggregate data sets of varying agricultural potentials by gender, entitlement sets, household types, communities, ethnicities and geographical regions in the ECA region.

Third, it is important to be aware of the opportunities and constraints that gendered entitlements place on the abilities of males and females to meaningfully engage in food production (division of labour, symbolic and material access to and control of resources, obligations and responsibilities within and beyond farming, entitlements within and beyond farming, interaction of multiple roles, their mutually reinforcing/cooperation or conflicting roles, competing demand for labour time, inactive agency that negatively affects optimism and ambition to explore new opportunities, inactive agency that inhibits seeking advisory and material support, for example from the NAADS etc.

And finally, addressing the management traits in general and gendered management traits in particular transcends the realms of psychology, sociology, rural development, economics, gender studies and philosophy. It is imperative therefore that agricultural research and development constitutes multi-disciplinary teams of agricultural and social scientists so that management and gendered management traits affecting and influencing food production are understood in their diverse forms and addressed holistically.

Mainstreaming Gendered Food Entitlements Within National Agricultural Policies. Programmes and Projects: The Case of the NAADS in Uganda

Several agricultural policies and programmes of countries in the ECA region have made commitments to gender mainstreaming. In Uganda, for example, the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) has a Poverty and Gender Strategy (Republic of Uganda 2003) that demonstrates both the range of gender mainstreaming concerns within the NAADS institution in particular and within communities in general. At institutional level, the strategy shows concern with inequitable hiring policies whereby contractual conditions may limit those hired to a narrow range of personnel who are already holding key positions thus excluding women from key positions at Secretariat and District levels thereby failing to support the gender principles of the NAADS programme.

Gender mainstreaming is incorporated in both the NAADS vision and mission both of which reiterate making significant and tangible contributions to creating the conditions within which the rural poor, and especially women and youth, can address their livelihood needs, especially their income poverty. This implies empowering the rural poor, especially poor women and the youth, both to seek agricultural information and technologies and to be able to utilise them to serve their own needs and interests, and especially to raise their incomes and increase their asset base. Within the NAADS, gender mainstreaming further implies avoiding reinforcing existing social arrangements that constrain the rural poor, especially poor rural women from improving their well-being (Republic of Uganda 2003).

The NAADS further operationalises empowerment as enabling those previously denied the ability to make strategic life choices, acquire such ability. That is, the rural poor, especially poor rural women and youth should be able to: increase the levels of control they have over their own lives; make their own decisions about livelihood options; and, translate their chosen livelihood options into improvements in their well being. Furthermore, the NAADS operationalises equity as: addressing the different priorities and constraints of different categories of men and women, either directly through NAADS own initiatives or indirectly through linkages with other programmes; addressing inequality attached to various social categories including gender, ethnicity, class or wealth, age and disability; and, addressing inequity at different levels of government and non-governmental activity and in all institutions, from households, farmer groups and fora, to local government organisations and markets (ibid).

The NAADS Poverty and Gender Strategy further stresses farmer group members' awareness of the livelihood positions of the different members and the implications of these differences for the members' involvement in enterprise development (ibid). If members are not aware, the strategy calls for discussions about the different livelihood positions and their implications for group plans. Similarly, the strategy calls for ascertaining the risks and uncertainties of the enterprises selected and putting in place measures to reduce the impacts of the risks and uncertainties. Where the uncertainties, risks and strategies for address are not known to the groups, there is need to document and disseminate them.

The NAADS Poverty and Gender Strategy also brings to attention of policy makers and implementers how decisions about enterprise development are translated at the household level, whose work overloads are affected and what resources are affected. The strategy also calls for understanding of how some household members could lose their control over household resources as a result of the expansion of

production of an existing activity or as a result of a new activity. The strategy further questions whether all household members are likely to share in any improved incomes and recommends that a process for discussing these issues within farmer groups and within households of NAADS participating farmers needs to be incorporated into the various processes of enterprise development.

Mainstreaming Gender in Informal Community and Household Institutions

At community and household levels, the NAADS highlights several covert and overt practices that justify gender mainstreaming, amongst which is social exclusion whereby poorer farmers could be excluded from farmer groups and farmer fora by rules about literacy and numeracy skills, or physical assets (house, livestock or land) and social group membership (gender, age, ethnicity) conditions. The strategy further points to the possibility of discriminatory farmer institutional processes whereby, farmer fora members operate in support of wealthier group members and men in terms of enterprise choices, skills training and other support they need to enable them benefit from NAADS services. Another concern for gender mainstreaming outlined by the NAADS poverty and gender strategy is failure to support transformative change. This includes local views about culturally appropriate roles for men and women that result in overburdening of either sex and the use of these views by programme implementers to limit the opportunities made available to different categories of people. The strategy is further cognizant of inequities within groups; farmer group membership “rules” or even “norms” of good membership that place pressure on poorer members to conform even though they might be left more vulnerable. The problem of inability to engage with markets due to lack of skills and “bargaining power” to negotiate better prices in the marketplace by poorer men and women is another concern for gender mainstreaming stressed in the strategy. And finally, the strategy is aware that economic growth could result in further inequities. This may arise from promoting enterprises without adequate attention being paid to norms of labour use and divisions of responsibilities within households which could result into unequal sharing of burdens and benefits of enterprise development within households (ibid).

The NAADS poverty and gender strategy further states that the NAADS programme was designed to address both the practical and strategic gender needs which are key in gender mainstreaming (ibid). Practical gender needs are those constraints that affect the ease with which different categories of people are able to fulfill their current roles and responsibilities, for example the heavy domestic labour burden overloads of women that compromise the amount of time females can invest in productive work. Strategic gender needs are constraints that influence the

capacity of different categories of people to change their situation (roles, statuses and positions) in directions that they feel could improve their well-being. These constraints include ideologies that determine gender roles and responsibilities and entitlements (ibid).

The NAADS poverty and gender strategy is further cognisant of the heterogeneity of farmers including female farmers. It therefore emphasizes understanding of the characteristics of group members in terms of age, sex, marital status and their economic, physical and social assets. An understanding of farmers' home situations and how these impact on what the farmers can do or not do with NAADS is also called for. The strategy further calls for actions that farmer groups and NAADS programme can undertake to reduce constraints different members face. If members face considerable time constraints for example, group meetings could be minimised and be held in the most convenient locations, including within the household of different members (ibid).

Furthermore, the strategy is keen on the particular members who hold key positions within the farmer groups especially whether they know what it means to act in the interests of weaker members and accordingly act thus. The NAADS strategy also points to an understanding of how decisions about meetings, enterprises and capacity building needs are taken, whether everyone within the group understands the group accounts (and if not, why?), and if group behaviour is inequitable, group composition and group capacity issues should be addressed.

The strategy further seeks to ensure that service providers make specific efforts within farmer groups to ensure that voices of all members are heard. Where voices of all are not heard, the strategy suggests that the capacity of service providers to do this needs to be built and information about the groups, their composition etc., needs to be available for each new service provider so that issues of difference can be addressed. The strategy also cautions against groups engaged in activities such as savings that force poorer members to become indebted in order to be able to continue to stay within the group and maintain any benefits they might have acquired from joining the group. Plans for group savings need to be flexible and take into consideration the vulnerability of different members.

A key concern of the NAADS is that it does not simply reinforce existing forms of inequity, and reproduce programmes that focus principally on those who already have the ability to access resources, including advisory services and technologies by themselves. The NAADS focus is on increasing the asset base of the rural poor

thereby decreasing their vulnerability and increasing their opportunity for economic growth. According to the NAADS poverty and gender strategy, special efforts or activities are needed to first identify and then to convince the vulnerable farmers, especially vulnerable women, to join farmer institutions since poorer farmers are often socially, economically and physically isolated. Once poorer farmers join farmer institutions, again special efforts are needed to ensure that they can influence decisions about the type of activities in which they would like to engage, have the information needed to assess the viability of these proposed activities and determine the type, relevance and quality of goods and services they need in order to gain from their chosen activity.

This particular focus of gender mainstreaming within the NAADS seeks to overcome barriers that have conventionally ignored the socially, economically and physically isolated in service delivery. Its success depends on local knowledge and ability to deal with more powerful community members who often respond more quickly to opportunities being offered. Local community based organisations and NGOs with a grassroots base were identified by the strategy as the relevant organisations to undertake this task within the NAADS programme.

Addressing Isolation and Lack of Empowerment

While income poverty is the principal focus of the NAADS, through its support for local institution building, gender mainstreaming expects to impact on other aspects of poverty, including the sense of isolation and lack of empowerment. Within NAADS, it is the farmer institutions, the farmer groups and farmer fora that should decide how resources are to be allocated, how tasks and responsibilities are to be carried out, and how they will evaluate the activities and outputs. Activities carried out in groups are expected to increase the leverage of individual members over resources. The ability of the groups to achieve this depends on whether they have the required capacity, that is, the skills and information. Farmer groups and farmer fora processes are not automatically equitable. Even when these organisations have participatory processes, these are usually of the type that keeps the authority structure of people, ideas and decision-making, intact. Rules and norms (the unwritten rules), and the ability of individuals to manipulate these in their own interests, or in the interests of others, determine who decides what, who does what, and who actually gets what, even within these institutions. The challenge for mainstreaming gender within the NAADS is to impact on these processes. Theoretically, therefore, enhancing the participation of poor men and women is expected to lead to articulation of their interests in ways which can influence institutional rules and practices (effectiveness) and consequently lead to making of

decisions about resource use that lead to poverty reduction in the material sense (impact).

Addressing Time Poverty

The NAADS poverty and gender strategy states that the NAADS programme was designed to address both the practical and strategic gender needs which are key in gender mainstreaming (ibid). Practical gender needs are those constraints that affect the ease with which different categories of people are able to fulfill their current roles and responsibilities, for example the heavy domestic labour burden overloads of women that compromise the amount of time females can invest in productive work. Strategic gender needs are constraints that influence the capacity of different categories of people to change their situation (roles, statuses and positions) in directions that they feel could improve their well-being. These constraints include ideologies that determine gender roles and responsibilities and entitlements (ibid).

Bringing Men and the Youth Back into Agriculture in General and Food Production in Particular

There is urgent need for bringing men and the youth back into food production in the ECA region through:

- making food production in particular and agricultural production in general economically profitable, and,
- facilitating a gender ideological shift from conceiving food production and provisioning as a social role and responsibility for females to conceiving food production and a profitable economic right.

Specifically, there is need to create favourable conditions for the rural poor, especially poor women and the youth to engage in commercial food production and to empower the rural poor, especially poor women to seek advisory services and technologies and to use them to serve their own needs and interests, especially in raising their incomes from farming. Secondly, the rural poor, especially poor women with no direct access to agricultural resources should also benefit from the improved agricultural production and productivity resulting from the activities of agricultural policies and programmes.

Conclusions

Feeding the ECA region in the Twenty First Century requires simultaneous addressing of both the management and bio physical production components of the food production system. The management component and rural ways of life are

intimately intertwined. Values governing rural ways of life permeate food production practices too in that through gender norms, beliefs and practices, they determine the material and socio-interactive entitlements of males and females there-in, to the detriment of the latter. This compromises food production because the bulk of participants in smallholder agriculture (females) produce food production more as an extension of their gender determined social provisioning roles, in addition to the reproductive, child care, care for the elderly and the sick and household management. In addition, they face a host of constraints including heavy labour overloads, lesser decision making powers within households and wider communities and lesser access to, and control over resources.

Unfortunately, agricultural research and development from the physical science perspective is yet to acknowledge let alone address the constraints to food production posed by the gendered management component of farming systems, more especially how gender affects food production. It is imperative therefore that gender is mainstreamed into agricultural research and development not only for purposes of advancing food production but also as a strategy for achieving gender equality.

Recommendations

1. Gender analysis should be integral in the conceptualisation, design, execution, dissemination and utilization of all agricultural research and development initiatives.
2. There should also be a conscious integration of the “management component” of farming systems in the conceptualisation, design, execution, dissemination and utilization of agricultural research and development initiatives. Focus should not be exclusively on the bio-physical production component.
3. Agricultural research institutions should conduct gender audits to gauge their levels of gender awareness and understand how gender manifests within the institutions to the detriment of conceptualizing and executing gendered research and developing gendered agricultural policy.
4. Gender analysts need to be recruited in all agricultural research institutions.

5. Gender budgeting should be introduced and adopted in agricultural research institutions to facilitate gender mainstreaming in agricultural research and development.
6. Agricultural research institutions should collect and disaggregate data sets of varying agricultural potentials by gender, entitlement sets, household types, communities, ethnicities and geographical regions in the ECA region.
7. Agricultural research institutions should develop a conscious awareness of the opportunities and constraints that gendered entitlements place on the abilities of males and females to meaningfully engage in food production (division of labour, symbolic and material access to, and control of resources, obligations and responsibilities within and beyond farming, entitlements within and beyond farming, interaction of multiple roles, their mutually reinforcing/cooperation or conflicting roles, competing demand for labour time, inactive agency that negatively affects optimism and ambition to explore new opportunities, inactive agency that inhibits seeking advisory and material support, for example from the NAADS etc.
8. Agricultural research institutions should develop a conscious awareness that addressing the management traits in general and gendered management traits in particular transcends the realms of psychology, sociology, rural development, economics, gender studies and philosophy. Hence, agricultural research and development institutions should constitute multi-disciplinary teams of agricultural and social scientists so that the management and gendered management traits affecting and influencing food production are understood in their diverse forms and addressed holistically.

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