

LEARNING CASE 6: WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT VS. GENDER APPROACH

(TIME REQUIRED: 30 MINUTES)

1. A project in an African country aimed to increase agricultural income by introducing new crops suitable for exports. The cultivation of these crops required large tracts of land and the use of machinery. Although no analysis was undertaken, it was evident that women needed to be supported to increase their income. A component was added that included: (i) training of women extension agents in nutrition and home making; (ii) provision of extension services by these trained agents to women beneficiaries; (iii) some training opportunities reserved for women beneficiaries; and (iv) some income generating activities for women in non-agricultural products.

2. The component was not successful. Women were rarely available for the extension training, nor did they benefit from the training opportunities. The majority of the income generating activities were unsuccessful because women rarely have the assets required as collateral for small loans. And there were no organized groups that could tap these credits.

Questions for Discussion:

- Were the intended objectives valid?
- Why did the project not succeed? What could have been the problems?
- What kind of information would the project designer need for developing an effective project?

Notes for Instructor:

Objective: To identify differences between a gender and a WID approach. Break participants into small groups. Ask how they would design this project differently, if they were to adopt a gender approach. Illustrate the difference between the two approaches using specific examples. The trainer could first discuss the likely reasons why such a project would not succeed and then move on to how the project could be designed with hindsight.

Questions for Discussion:**1. Problems Included:** Why did the project not succeed?

- Extension trainers were male. Interaction was therefore difficult.
- Extension agents focused on cooking and nutrition when they spoke to women. Extension trainers were not trained in the subsistence crops that the women produced.
- Extension trainers went to their homes to look for women during the day, when they were busy cultivating their own lands or working on their household lands.
- It was also found that women were forced to spend time helping their husbands cultivate new commercial crops and therefore had little time for new agricultural activities.
- Women had no assets in their own name to provide as collateral for loans and could not avail of the credit.
- Sustainability was a problem and funds were spent on women, without any attempt to enhance their productivity.
- What could be done differently?

2. Setting Objectives: What would be the gender outcomes or results for this project?

[Answers could include empowerment of women, increasing the income that women generate, increasing productivity.]

- Ask participants what a gender objective would be.
- Suggest that a gender-related objective would need to address gender differences or changing the power structures in a way that will advantage the currently disadvantaged sex.
- Thus, in the above project, it was expected that increasing women's income would lead to more balanced decision making in the home on how to spend the income.

3. Obtaining Information: What kinds of information would they have needed to design the project to achieve the above gender objectives or outcomes?

[In order to design the project to achieve gender objectives, one would need to fully understand the differential roles, responsibilities, assets, needs, and preferences of both women and men].

- One would need to seek information on the differentials in terms of access to and control over different types of assets/resources.
- For example, what do women own in terms of land that they cultivate?
- Do they have the same needs in terms of extension services?
- Are current extension services reaching both women and men as required and relevant for both of them?
- Do women control the income they generate?
- How can you increase women's control over assets generated from the project activity, etc. ?
- Where would they have found such information and how would they have obtained it?

[There are different ways project designers collect information necessary for project design.]

- However, the most important point that needs to be made is that all information-seeking activities undertaken during project preparation must seek sex-disaggregated information as well as gender-related information.
- This is the most efficient and effective way of obtaining the necessary information.
- Thus, any interviews undertaken with stakeholders must ensure that both women and men are represented.
- In interviewing institutional stakeholders, institutions that work with women must be included.
- In addition, discuss where such information would be available.
- Also, discuss the possibility of doing qualitative assessments to understand the different perspectives of both men and women.

4. Influencing Project Design: How would the new information influence project design? What kinds of measures would address the problems they found and ensure that women also benefited from the project?

[For example, if one knew that women owned only small portions of land on which they essentially did subsistence farming and worked only as unremunerated labor on their husband's land, then it would be clear that the extension services will not be equally relevant for women as for men, unless some of the advice and services of extension agents would apply to subsistence farming].

- Focus may then need to be placed on whether the income generated from their subsistence farming can be increased.
- The proposed design could also include providing them with off-farm income-generating activities that may be undertaken together with their subsistence farming.
- If the information indicates that women spend inordinate time finding fuel and fodder, a component may be added to make such resources more accessible so that they have greater time for leisure or other productive activities.

5. How would they measure whether the project was benefiting both men and women?

- What would be a sex-disaggregated indicator?
- Number of beneficiaries receiving guidance from extension services, disaggregated by sex;
- Number of women involved in income generating activities;
- Average increase in income per women;
- What would be a gender indicator?
- Measuring change in gender relationships is difficult and often needs to be done through qualitative surveys and interviews.

[Through these interviews, one would need to see if the increased incomes resulted in greater empowerment of women and consequently improved gender balance in the home.]