



**SECURING
WOMEN'S
RESOURCE RIGHTS
THROUGH GENDER
TRANSFORMATIVE
APPROACHES**



Investing in rural people



Developing Gender Transformative Approaches to Strengthen Women's Land Rights in **Ethiopia**

FOUNDATIONAL GENDER ANALYSIS



Research Summary Brief



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Top Cover Photograph: CIFOR researcher, development agent and community elders sitting together in a non-PASIDP II village after prayers led by elders to bless our research team, after conducting focus group discussion with community members to understand gender norms, in Central Ethiopia regional state.

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Bottom Cover Photograph: Research team, development agents, and female GMF participants pose together after completing a focus group discussion to understand gender norms in Central Ethiopia regional state. The banner in the background congratulates the couple owning the house for graduating from the GMF training.

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ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

SECURING WOMEN'S RESOURCE RIGHTS THROUGH GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES



In 2020, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) invited a consortium of the Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) to work with selected IFAD projects to promote and strengthen women's land rights through the integration of gender transformative approaches (GTAs) in rural development interventions by improving policies, tools and practices.

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https://www.ifad.org/en/gender_transformative_approaches

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IFAD project network



Colombia
Building Rural
Entrepreneurial
Capacities
Programme:
Trust and
Opportunity
(TOP)
(2012- 2022)



Niger*

The Gambia
Resilience of
Organizations for
Transformative
Smallholder
Agriculture
Programme
(ROOTS)
(2019 - 2026)



Uganda
National Oil Palm
Project (NOPP)
(2019- 2029)



Ethiopia
Participatory
Small Scale
Irrigation
Programme
(PASIDP-II)
(2017-2024)



Kyrgyzstan
Access to
Markets Project
(2018 - 2023)



Bangladesh
Char Development
and Settlement
Project IV (CDSP IV)
(2011 - 2022)



Introduction

This series of briefs summarizes the key learnings from gender analyses conducted across six countries: Kyrgyzstan, Uganda, The Gambia, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, and Colombia. As part of the IFAD Global Initiative for Gender Transformative Approaches, these briefs will facilitate co-learning processes, knowledge exchange and capacity building, the scaling out of good practices and lessons learned, and the integration of evidence into advocacy and policy processes.

BACKGROUND

Innovative approaches are needed to achieve the United Nation's Agenda 2030, including reducing gender and other social inequalities. Land rights, understood here broadly as bundles of rights to access and make decisions over the use of land, is one area where inequalities are particularly prevalent. In development practice and policies, interventions that aim to support gender equality and land rights have often failed to effectively address the root causes of inequality. Integrating Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs) into these interventions can improve land rights practices and outcomes.

Access to land and resources, as well as control over them, are crucial for women's empowerment. However, women face barriers such as inadequate legal frameworks, ineffective policy implementation, and discriminatory cultural attitudes, which limit their access, control, and use of land and resources. If not recognized and proactively addressed, investments and development initiatives in the agricultural sector can reinforce or even exacerbate such inequalities. Addressing these institutional barriers is therefore essential to achieve gender equality and secure women's rights and access to land.

Gender transformative approaches challenge the underlying barriers that sustain gender inequality by identifying factors that enable equitable involvement of women in decision-making and resource control rather than addressing the symptoms (e.g. unequal income). By fostering lasting and pervasive changes, GTAs aim to create enabling environments for women's empowerment. Integrating GTAs in rural development programs and interventions can help address inequalities in land access, rural services, and markets, thereby enhancing women's livelihood outcomes and ensuring the recognition, protection, and enjoyment of their rights. Such an integration will require understanding gender dynamics surrounding land rights, but also engaging intimately with broader programmatic design and implementation strategies to identify entry-points for effectively transforming policies and processes that (re)produce discriminatory gender relations.

THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE

To advance the recognition and protection of women's land rights, IFAD initiated the three-year Global Initiative for Gender Transformative Approaches (2021-2024). IFAD collaborated with the Centre for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry Centre (CIFOR-ICRAF), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) to integrate GTAs in IFAD projects across six countries: Bangladesh, Colombia, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, The Gambia, and Uganda. The initiative aims to scale up GTAs by sharing knowledge and improving policies, tools and practices.

The initiative team worked collaboratively with IFAD project personnel in each country to share, add value and learn from ongoing efforts. Appropriate and relevant approaches have been identified for scaling women's land rights initiatives. Each IFAD project is unique, entailing different phases and timelines of project implementation, approaches to addressing gender, and issues concerning rights to land and resources. While few of these projects explicitly focus on land and resource rights or gender equality, these issues underpin project implementation with multiple entry points for intervention. The initiative works across a diversity of projects and contexts to harvest lessons and promote cross-learning. The lessons are shared with a wider pool of approximately 30 IFAD supported projects and beyond.



Gender Analysis

This series of briefs summarizes key gender analysis learnings from six countries, facilitating co-learning processes, knowledge exchange, capacity building, scaling out of good practices, lessons learned, and integrating evidence into advocacy and policy processes.

To achieve the United Nations' Agenda 2030 and reduce gender inequalities in land rights, integrating Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs) into development interventions is crucial. GTAs address root causes of gender inequality by fostering lasting changes in decision-making and resource control, offering a strategic framework to enhance women's empowerment in accessing and managing land resources while challenging discriminatory cultural attitudes and institutional barriers.

The initiative aims to scale up GTAs by sharing knowledge and improving policies, tools and practices.

In-depth gender analyses were conducted in all six countries to examine the intricate relationship between local context, gender dynamics, and land rights.

The methodology, based on stakeholder engagement and innovative tools, explored factors influencing women's access to land, including legal rights, customary practices, and gaps between recognition and implementation. By employing diverse data collection methods such as Community Profiles, Key Informant Interviews with project staff, and gender-disaggregated Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Couples, Family and Friends Interviews (CFFI), the analysis aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the root causes of gender inequalities in women's resource rights, and evaluate the potential influence of a household-level GTA, informing IFAD project design and implementation to advance gender equality and women's empowerment across diverse contexts.



For a more detailed description of the gender analysis methodology, please refer to the **Gender Analysis Methodology report**.

Gender Analysis Methods

The gender analysis methodology utilized qualitative case studies and adapted protocols from GENNOVATE and Pro-WEAI to gather data. Various data collection methods were employed in Ethiopia:



KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KII) with project staff



Introduction and project approach to gender.



Identify existing barriers and normative constraints to women's land rights.



Survey existing and potential interventions, good practices, risks, and failures.



FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGD) with GMF participants and non-participants



Perception of community context: describe conditions in community from FG participants' point of view.



Existing rights: increase understanding of how participants conceptualize property rights within the community and norms related to those rights.



Challenges and barriers to rights: gain understanding of operation of local rights (formal and customary) to identify patterns/drivers of security and insecurity.



Potential interventions and GMF influence: Understand participants' perceptions of interventions focused on resource rights equity, potential actions that could target existing challenges, and potential GMF influence.



Diet Diversity: 24-hour recall of diversity of the food consumed by each participant



KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS TO DEVELOP COMMUNITY PROFILES through group and individual interviews



Provide social, economic, agricultural, and political background information about the community, and the current situation in terms of use and access and control over key resources



Gain an understanding of community-level factors that generate or reinforce gender norms that hinder the full recognition and enjoyment of resource rights



COUPLE, FAMILY AND FRIENDS INTERVIEWS with married couples and their designated family/friend



Access and control over production resource



Division of labour and responsibilities



Earning cash income, decision making on household matters, and participation in community groups



Comparison of now vs. before: on general wellbeing and gender-based violence



Learnings from Ethiopia

PROJECT CONTEXT

In Ethiopia, the IFAD country programme has two main objectives: improving resilience and productivity of ecosystems and livelihoods through better natural resource management, particularly water; and fostering linkages with the private sector for increased access to markets, finance, and agricultural technology. Key areas of investment include small-scale irrigation development, sustainable natural resource management, rural financial inclusion, community-driven development among pastoral groups, and knowledge exchange through partnerships with the private sector, research institutions, and other low-income countries. The programme also aims to promote sustainable agriculture, enhance rural livelihoods, and drive economic growth in low-income nations.

The project chosen for the Global initiative in Ethiopia is the Participatory Small-scale Irrigation Development Programme (PASIDP II). Implemented between 2016 and 2024, PASIDP II envisages the development of 18,400 ha of small-scale irrigation schemes in four regions, benefiting 108,750 poor rural households. Particular attention is given to women, young people, and vulnerable groups. In addition to increasing agricultural productivity and resilience of ecosystems, the programme is expected to create 15,000 new jobs, generating higher incomes and community resilience. In addition, the programme supports linkages to markets and services so that smallholder farmers can increase their productivity, competitiveness, and

incomes. It aims to enhance their resilience against external shocks and those induced by adverse weather and climate conditions. The programme thus aims to improve farmers' prosperity, food security and nutrition. In addition, PASIDP-II will train participants to take charge of the development process and encourage women to join the decision-making bodies of water users' associations.

A key learning opportunity from PASIDP II is their implementation of a GTA called Gender Model Family. This capacity development method was first developed in Ghana and adopted by the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture in a previous project called Small-scale and Micro Irrigation Support (SMIS). In Ethiopia, it targets married couples, and facilitates a series of joint trainings to identify work burden and power imbalance, appreciate the problem, and commit to take action to address the problem. Each GMF pioneer family is expected to recruit at least three households after internalizing and practicing the approach, who – in turn – are also expected to recruit new households.

GMF was piloted by the PASIDP II in 2019 in three villages across three small-scale irrigation (SSI) schemes, involving 44 pioneer households, and anecdotal results were very encouraging. The project decided to roll out GMF in more areas and is now implemented in 56 SSI schemes involving 744 pioneer and 3,157 extended families, totalling 3901 households.



Interview with GMF participant in Oromia Region (Mar 2023, Credit: Teshome Beyene).

GENDER ANALYSIS

The data collection instruments developed for the gender analysis were adapted to the unique Ethiopian country and project context and needs. This included adding questions, module and instruments to document the expected effects of GMF for pioneer families and their communities, on issues particularly important to PASIDP II such as management of irrigated and non-irrigated land, access to nutritious foods, and access to income opportunities. The sampling approach was also adapted to capture GMF's multiplier effect. Aside from GMF pioneers, we also interviewed their close friends and family to document whether changes brought about by GMF are observable (and therefore more likely to be replicated) by them.

DATA COLLECTION

In February and March 2023, data was collected in three of the four regions where PASIDP II is implemented: Oromia, Amhara, and the former Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNPR) regional states. Tigray was excluded due to security concerns. The former SNNPR split into four regions; our data was collected in what is now called the Central Ethiopia region. In each region, one study village was selected within PASIDP II command area and another comparison village located within the same woreda (i.e., district), with the same ethnic, linguistic and religious background, but outside the PASIDP II command area. In total, six villages, two in each region, were included in the study. Study villages were purposively selected to be the three first villages where GMF was implemented, to ensure that effects – if any – will be observed. Each of these regional village clusters represent different ethno-linguistic and religious norms. Four languages and three religious groups were included: Amharic (Christian Orthodox), Oromia (Muslim), as well as Kambategna and Hadeгна (Christian Protestant).



Key Informant Interviews with nine IFAD and PASIDP II project staff including Monitoring & Evaluation, and Gender & Social Inclusion experts at Federal, Regional, and Woreda levels provided contextual information on the project, communities, and factors influencing women's resource rights.

Community profiles were created for each of the six selected communities. Two local experts, PASIDP II staff, development agents, or community leaders were interviewed in each community.



Focus Group Discussions were conducted in all six communities and participants were segregated by sex and included groups of not GMF trained and GMF trained individuals, resulting in 18 FGDs with 4 to 12 participants each. The FGD guide used during the study included questions about the community context, existing rights to land and resources, challenges to these rights, and potential solutions.

An additional survey instrument was developed for the Ethiopian gender analysis called **Couples, Family/Friends Interview** whereby couples (wife and husband) were interviewed separately, each with one appointed close family member or friend of the same gender, to understand the impact of GMF on the couple, from the point of view of those closest to them. In study villages we interviewed two couples who were GMF pioneers and their friends/family (i.e., GMF couples), and another two couples and their friends/family who were never trained in GMF (i.e., non-GMF couples) (8 women + 8 men). In comparison villages, two non-GMF couples and their family/friends were interviewed (4 women + 4 men). In total, 72 interviews (36 women, 36 men) were conducted using this instrument.



Men in non-GMF village participating in focus group discussions in Central Ethiopia.

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Key Learnings



01

CONCEPT OF WELL-BEING:

Recognizing clear differences between women and men in all areas highlights the influence of cultural beliefs and societal expectations. Women heading households encounter challenges like limited mobility, discrimination, and poverty, contributing to these differences. The disparities also involve household conflicts, unequal control over land and decision-making, influenced by cultural views that position unmarried women below married women and both below men. Across all our sites, wellbeing was consistently defined in terms of improved love, harmony and collaboration in the household. This strong alignment with GMF objectives suggests a potentially strong demand for training, regardless of existing gender norms and cultural perspectives.

02

WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS ACQUISITION:

Across study villages, women primarily acquire land rights through inheritance from parents or husbands and through marriage. New migrants face challenges in gaining land rights due to the lack of marital and filial connections to existing landowners. Despite Ethiopia's constitution protecting equal land rights, land inheritance are limited by gendered cultural and religious norms in four study villages in two regions, with women inheriting half that of their male siblings or none at all.

03

IMPACT OF GMF ON LAND MANAGEMENT:

Positive changes in women's participation in managing farmland are observed in PASIDP II study villages in Oromia and Central Ethiopia, attributed to GMF and increased female membership in the Irrigation Water User Association (IWUA). In Amhara, joint land titling has contributed to equal land ownership, and GMF's impact is more evident in reducing conflict, sharing household chores, and enhancing joint decision-making.

04

LIMITED RECOGNITION OF WOMEN'S FARMING CONTRIBUTIONS:

Despite women's significant contributions to farming, there is limited community acknowledgment of their impact on farming and welfare. Solutions often emphasize collaboration between men and women, highlighting the potential role of GMF. Gendered solutions, such as ownership of livestock for emergency sales, are within the scope of household-focused interventions like GMF.



05

RECURRING GENDER INEQUALITIES IN RESOURCES:

Unequal resource and land rights, under-representation of women in agriculture, and pervasive perceptions of women as weak persist across various resources. GMF training emerges as a rare but existing solution to address these inequalities, emphasizing the need for alternative ideas and interventions.

06

GENDERED NORMS IN IRRIGATED LANDS:

Gendered norms related to land differ between irrigated and non-irrigated areas, with the introduction of irrigation infrastructure in Oromia leading to a more equal gender norm. It is unclear whether this shift is influenced by PASIDP II's focus on women and female-headed households or represents an alignment with Ethiopia's constitution via irrigation projects.

07

GMF'S IMPACT ON COUPLES AND WELL-BEING:

The consistent alignment between couples' motivations to participate in GMF and the understanding of GMF's objectives across study communities suggests a shared and comprehended message. GMF contributes positively to couples' collaboration, equality, and understanding, fostering peace and love within families and facilitating positive changes over time.



GMF participant in Central Ethiopia regional state, showing the small-scale irrigation network providing water to his garden © 2023, Stibniati Atmadja

08

SHIFT IN GENDER NORMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

GMF participants exhibit a more equitable attitude toward labor division and responsibilities at the household level compared to non-participants. While GMF fosters a shift in social norms within couples and their family/friends, extending this influence to the broader community may require complementary approaches addressing community-level gender roles and responsibilities. Despite progress, there are lingering inequalities in assigning influential responsibilities at the communal level, emphasizing the need for targeted efforts beyond the family/friends sphere.



09

POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON LABOR DIVISION:

GMF has a profound influence on labor division within couples, fostering a willingness to share housework, income opportunities, decision-making, and quality time. While concerns such as men's fear of cultural backlash exist, tangible benefits observed by close family and friends, including reduced conflict, increased income, and improved well-being, contribute to a positive shift in attitudes towards gendered divisions of labor.

10

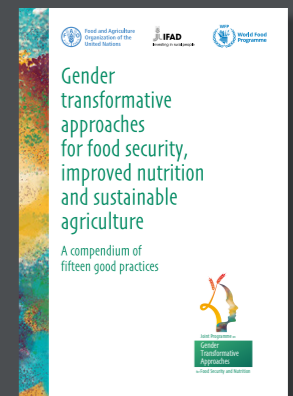
PERCEIVED CULTURAL CHANGE AND VISIBILITY:

GMF's positive influence on social norms is evident within GMF couples and their close circles, where the impact on women's opportunities to participate in traditionally male-dominated communal activities is acknowledged. However, this cultural change is yet to permeate the larger community, highlighting the need for continued efforts to broaden the acceptance of gender equality principles.



Resources

Compendium of good practices for gender transformative approaches for food security, improved nutrition, and sustainable agriculture (<https://doi.org/10.4060/cb1331en>) which was co-produced by IFAD.



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Recommendations

To address the challenges, strengthen land and resource rights, and enhance the effectiveness of interventions, a range of recommendations have been formulated:

<p>01</p>  <p>Integrate GMF from Programme Inception: Integrate GMF principles and practices at the outset of programme design to maximize programme-wide benefits of intra-household partnership, knowledge retention, equitable decision-making, and household labor efficiency.</p>	<p>02</p>  <p>Enhance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): Harmonize GMF with an inclusive M&E framework combining qualitative and quantitative data collection. Capture deep intra-household changes often overlooked by traditional indicators, including spillover effects on immediate family, communities, and beyond.</p>
<p>03</p>  <p>Cost Efficiency Assessment: Assess the value for money of GMF implementation by tagging the budget to understand resource allocation compared to other interventions. Investigate spillover effects on various levels (family, friends, communities) to identify cost-saving elements.</p>	
<p>04</p>  <p>Complement GMF with Community-Level Approaches: Harmonize GMF with complementary gender-transformative approaches targeting community-level gender norms, female-headed households, and single women. This combination can address a broader spectrum of gender-related challenges.</p>	<p>05</p>  <p>Incorporate Soft Indicators in M&E: Expand M&E frameworks to include "soft" indicators of GMF effectiveness, such as measures of love, respect, reduction in violence/conflict, food security, and income stability. Move beyond technical indicators to capture the nuanced impacts of GMF.</p>

<p>06</p>  <p>Evaluate Direct and Indirect Effects: Design M&E frameworks that capture both direct and indirect effects of GMF. Direct effects include reduced household conflict and improved mutual respect, while indirect effects encompass enhanced women's and children's health, increased household asset value, and improved livelihood and food resilience.</p>	<p>07</p>  <p>Enhance GMF Training Period Management: Acknowledge and invest in the crucial interim period of approximately one year during which GMF participants face challenges in learning and embodying their roles as model families. Address potential risks, including community backlash and staff turnover, to maintain momentum.</p>
<p>08</p>  <p>Explore Synergies with Development Agendas: Leverage the alignment of GMF with a development agenda, contributing to broad appeal at the national and community levels. Utilize existing programmes and structures within influential implementing agencies to enhance the impact of GMF.</p>	<p>09</p>  <p>Promote Gender Equity in Implementing Teams: Strive for gender balance in implementing teams, recognizing the influence of team composition on community acceptance and the acceptance of colleagues within the programme on the importance of GTAs to attain its objectives. While challenges in recruitment may exist, consider the positive impact of mixed-gender teams in convincing male community leaders and household heads to embrace GMF.</p>
<p>10</p>  <p>Foster Community Support and Mutual Learning: Emphasize the importance of community support and mutual learning among GMF trainees. Facilitate monthly meetings for trainees and other families to offer mutual support, share experiences, seek advice, and stay motivated, creating a supportive network.</p>	



INITIATIVE CONSORTIUM



The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and World Agroforestry (ICRAF) envision a more equitable world where trees in all landscapes, from drylands to the humid tropics, enhance the environment and well-being for all. CIFOR and ICRAF are CGIAR Research Centers.



Climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, and malnutrition. These four interconnected global crises have put at stake the wellbeing of our planet for years. Fueled by COVID-19, their impact on agriculture, landscapes, biodiversity, and humans is now stronger than ever. Reversing this negative trend is a challenge, but also an opportunity for bold choices and integrated solutions. Established in 2019, the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) was created to address these four crises, maximizing impact for change at key points in the food system.



The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) provides research-based policy solutions to sustainably reduce poverty and end hunger and malnutrition in developing countries. Established in 1975, IFPRI currently has more than 600 employees working in over 50 countries. It is a research center of CGIAR, a worldwide partnership engaged in agricultural research for development.

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