



OXFAM

Austrian
Development Cooperation

**POLICY PAPER ON GENDER
MAINSTREAMING OF AGRICULTURE
RELATED STRATEGIES**

*Based on gender mainstreaming of 2012-2015
RA Tavush social- economic development program*



Importance of the Issue

The first well-founded reflection on the problems of rural women has been offered by **the UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)**, which Armenia ratified in 1993.

The United Nations specifies the role of rural women within the context of the Millennium Development Goals looking at the aims related to poverty and hunger elimination and expansion of women's rights and opportunities in their interconnection.

Since 2010, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has taken up the issue of gender equity as one of its preferences suggesting that elimination of gender inequality in agriculture is considered as a development problem.¹

Oxfam's strategies are also based on special attention towards rural women. The organization's mission to combat poverty and injustice and the GROW advocacy campaign launched in 2011 with its motto of the *World without Hunger* are commensurate with FAO's principal vision of a world insured against hunger and malnutrition. If FAO, today, views both gender inequity and its traditional goals² in the same plane in its new strategy, adopting the approach that *Women are Key to Food Security*,³ Oxfam emphatically includes the gender component in all its programs guided by the motto *Women are the Heart and Soul of Our Programs*.

Introduction

The agriculture share in Armenia's gross domestic product stands at 19.2% (2013).⁴

37.1%⁵ of those working are employed in agriculture; 57.1% of them are women, which make them the most important participant in development of agriculture. Moreover, the share of agriculture in male employment structure is 31%, and in female employment structure – 44%. In addition, the number of women employed in non-formal employment structure of agriculture makes up to 87 percent.⁶

In essence, women produce the greater portion of agricultural products and they are considered the main guarantors of food supply and household economy survival in rural areas.

Problem Justifications

Gender research carried out in the area of agriculture has revealed, on the one hand, the key role of women in almost all links of agricultural value chain, and on the other hand, the gender inequality existing in the area. At the same time, a comparison of international and national documents related to expanding the opportunities of rural women demonstrates that the documents on the Republic of Armenia gender policies include certain measures to mitigate gender inequality in this area and even establish or suggest gender indicators to evaluate the situation. However, the national programs on the development of agricultural area either do not include a gender component at all or reflect it in a very insignificant way, which might cause an entrenchment of gender inequality when implementing those programs.

1 Women in Agriculture. Closing the gender gap for development, 2010-2011 <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa2010-11/en/>

2 FAO's mandate is to raise levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, better the lives of rural populations and contribute to the growth of the world economy. <http://www.fao.org/about/en/>

3 FAO at Work 2010-011 «Women-key to food security», <http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/am719e/am719e00.pdf>

4 National Accounts, 2013, GDP Production, <http://armstat.am/am/?nid=263>

5 Armenia in Numbers, 2013, http://www.armstat.am/file/article/armenia_13_4.pdf

6 Armenia's Men and Women, 2013, <http://armstat.am/file/article/gender.pdf>

Review of a number of strategic programs in the area of agriculture development adopted by the Government over the past two years does not allow calling them gender-sensitive. *The 2010-2020 Rural Agricultural Sustainable Development of the Republic of Armenia, the Concept Paper on Administrative Consolidation of Rural Communities in the Republic of Armenia, and socio-economic development programs of marzes (provinces)* do not contain information that would allow drawing a conclusion about their gender mainstreaming or possible gender impact. Today, the policy of promoting establishment of co-operatives is considered as one of the most important components of the current agricultural policies, and one of its manifestations is the inclusion of creation of agricultural co-operatives in the list of top priorities endorsed by the Government. However, if the programs of international organizations carried out in this direction necessarily contain a gender component, the Government's programs, which target the realization of the idea of agricultural cooperation, are not gender-sensitive. In fact, the women's factor in the organization of a cooperative movement is neglected, although the experience of women's cooperatives that already exists in the country is noteworthy.⁷

Goal and Objectives

The main goal is to maintain the principle of gender equality in socio-economic development programs and all spheres of life, which implies collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data during the entire process of project development and implementation evaluation of shifts in the gender situation, implementation of research, application of the gender budgeting principle in the process of development of marz and community budgets, provision of gender knowledge to those responsible for project development, as well as organization and implementation of training courses.

Suggestions

Through this paper it is suggested to ensure the gender sensitivity of national and marz development programs already adopted or under consideration in the area of agriculture. It is necessary to review and analyze the programs according to the sex-disaggregated statistical data, gender sensitive and disaggregated indicators proposed by the Government and national documents related to gender policies.⁸ A gender expert review is required of legislation regulating the field and of new legislative initiatives put into circulation. The inclusion of a gender component in marz development programs can be done through the system of monitoring envisioned by these very programs, within the framework of which it is possible to conduct policy analysis and to provide for inclusion of gender sensitive and disaggregated indicators and, thus, enhance the gender mainstreaming of the programs.

Another opportunity to take into consideration the gender component is to reflect it in annual work plans and logical frameworks of annual activities for implementation of marz socio-economic development programs. The first prerequisite for ensuring the gender sensitivity of the programs is collection of sex-disaggregated statistical data; the next step is their analysis and dissemination. It is necessary to undertake special measures in this direction especially in the provinces, at community and marz levels. At the same time, it is necessary to

7 Six women's cooperatives are operating in Vayots Dzor Marz of the Republic; they were created within the framework of the programs implemented by Oxfam Armenia Office.

8 Concept Paper on Gender Policies /2010/; RoA Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for 2011-2015 and programs on annual gender policy activities /2011, 2012, 2013/; the National Program against Gender Violence; the 2011-2015 Strategic Program against Gender Violence and annual activity plans; <http://www.gov.am/am/councils/reports/5/>

introduce a system of indicators for evaluation of shifts in the gender situation and monitoring, as well as to initiate or provide support for implementation of gender research.

There are also problems in terms of the need for awareness raising in the provinces of the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan on Gender Policies adopted by the Government and, within this framework, for deepening and expanding the list of annual activities envisioned in the area of agriculture. Specifically, there is a need for providing professional assistance to those in the governors' offices who are responsible for the development of the agricultural sector and gender policies in order to introduce a gender component in the programs. It is necessary to organize special training courses, seminars, and discussions for employees of the governors' offices and community municipalities on the topic of *Gender Mainstreaming of Programs*, as well as to raise awareness of the goals and objectives of the state gender policies among the state employees and community municipality staff.

It is especially important to provide for inclusion of a gender component in the governmental policy of consolidation of the land plots and development of agricultural co-operatives. The possible impact of this policy from a gender perspective has not been examined yet, although the country already has successful examples of women's active role in the cooperative movement. There is a need for studying women's participation and role in the development of agricultural cooperation and for broader dissemination of most successful experience and models.

The research results demonstrate that cooperatives play a stimulating role within the context of expanding rural women's economic opportunities; they empower women to make crucial decisions and take the responsibility for economic issues.

The expansion of women's economic opportunities largely depends on the willingness of women to overcome the existing stereotypes and their ability to fight against manifestations of discrimination. Organization of gender trainings to enhance women's self-esteem can contribute to economic progress and development of leadership qualities among women. The incorporation of gender trainings in agricultural training programs will be most effective based on a high demand as shown by research results.

