

Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services

Tip Sheet for Gender Responsive Extension Services

Audiences

Organizational Leaders, and Policymakers



Staff at Profit+ in Chipata, Zambia empower women to be leaders, whether in the office, the field, or as lead farmers. © M. Bell 2016



Local NGO and government staff come together at an INGENAES workshop in Nepal to become more gender-aware at their organizations. © B. Thawpa 2016

Developing a Gender Equity and Diversity Policy for the Workplace

Introduction

An extension service provider, whether public, private, or civil society based, that is committed to gender equity is well advised to develop and implement a gender equity policy for the work place that is tailored to that organization and reflects the commitments made by management and staff in terms of being – or becoming – a gender equitable organization. The goal is to maintain a diversified, dignified and empowering working environment.

Overarching Organizational Commitment

[Name of the organization] is committed to promoting gender equality in all of our work. We equally value the contribution of women and men farmers to their families, to agriculture and rural life, and to their societies. We equally value the contribution of men and women staff working for our organization (for the Department of Agricultural Extension and for partner organizations to rural communities) (optional, include as applicable). In all of our activities we will support both women and men in the pursuit of the equal enjoyment of rights, responsibilities, opportunities, resources and rewards, and we will give equal weight to the perceptions, interests, needs and priorities of both women and men. [Name of the organization] aims to facilitate the equitable engagement of women and men at work and among its beneficiaries. All [Name of the organization] partners endeavor to provide fair and equitable treatment for all people without regard to gender, race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, affiliation, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Specific Commitments to Action

What follows is a selection of statements to specific commitments that other organizations have made. These can serve as a starting point to select and further develop specific commitments that fit your organization. We advise that a broad based, participatory process be used to develop statements that the leadership and staff in your organizations are going to be committed to pursue or adhere to.

“Specifically, we will

- a) Respond to the information needs of women farmers and men farmers, including representing women and men farmers equitably and respectfully in the range of activities associated with agricultural production and rural development;
- b) Develop the capacity of our staff and extension colleagues to:



A Nepalese man sells his produce at the Haat Bazaar in Nepalgunj (mid-west), Nepal. © B. Thawpa 2016



Women also sell their produce at the Haat Bazaar in Nepalgunj (mid-west), Nepal. © B. Thawpa 2016



Farmers bring their produce to the Sahajpur Collection Center in Dhangadi (far-west), Nepal. © B. Thawpa 2016

- facilitate culturally appropriate and effective dialogue about gender equality,
- forge links with national and local organizations involved in the promotion of gender equality,
- produce programs that respond to both the practical and strategic needs of women and men, and
- give voice equitably to women and men farmers in the discussion of all important issues related to agriculture, health and rural development, representing the diverse, dynamic and changing roles both men and women play in development.

c) Encourage a positive working environment that supports gender equality and equal opportunity for women and men staff through training, strategic partner engagement and human resource policies that contribute to this environment.

d) Facilitate increased access to [Name of the organization] services by women farmers using (e.g., listening groups and interactive communication technologies).

e) Create a working environment, through locally appropriate and contextualized policies, processes, standards and norms, promote and support gender equality, equal opportunity, and a positive working environment for all employees.

f) Create and implement a five-year plan identifying clear goals, activities and targets related to gender equality.

g) Evaluate and refresh this policy at least every three years to take into account [Name of the organization] experiences, results, and new thinking about equality and gender.”

Here is another set of specific commitments that may be a suitable starting point for your organization:

“To maintain a diversified, dignified and empowering working environment, the following guidelines have been adopted by all partners/staff in [Name of the organization].

- Ensure fair and comparable wages, hours, and benefits for comparable work.
- Undertake recruitment and retention campaigns that target both women and men.
- Ensure that both women and men participate on interview panels and the review of applications.
- Encourage the employment of women and men in occupations or positions that are not normally considered “typical” based on gender stereotypes.
- Ensure diversity, inclusion and proportional representation in committees, meetings, training programs, and workshops.



Women farmers sell seasonal gourds at a market outside Lusaka, Zambia.

© K. Heinz 2015



Rumilda T. runs the Municipal Women's Office in Cabañas, Honduras, which works on behalf of vulnerable women in and around the community. © K. Heinz 2016

- Set aside sufficient funds for promoting gender equality, women empowerment, and diversity.
- Promote women's active participation in meetings.
- Provide professional development opportunities, mentoring and leadership opportunities at all levels, especially for women working in non-traditional fields, positions or occupations.
- Implement practical actions to enable retention of female staff, such as flexible scheduling, dependent care, and time-off for childbirth, parental leave, and family-related responsibilities.
- Avoid arranging meetings/workshops outside of normal office hours or during weekends/holidays if not urgent.
- Prohibit discrimination based on marital, parental, or reproductive status in decisions regarding employment or promotions.
- Prohibit and prevent all forms of violence in the workplace, including verbal, physical, and sexual harassment.
- Ensure zero tolerance of sexual harassment, and post guidelines for reporting such incidents and provisions for counseling.
- Refrain from patronizing comments or behaviors.
- Provide information on gender-based violence resources and [Domestic Violence Act 2010 \(or other national legislation as applicable\)](#) to all staff.
- Ensure the safety of female staff in the workplace, and during travel to and from field sites and offices.
- Ensure separate toilets for female and male staff."

References

The text passages above were adapted from *Farm Radio International's Gender Equity policy from March 2015*, and the *2014 Gender Equity Policy developed by the Climate Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods, CREL*, project implemented Winrock International in Bangladesh, 2012-2017.



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