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GENDER IMPACT STRATEGY FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

BILL & MELINDA GATES *foundation*



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OVERVIEW

The Bill & Melinda Gates foundation believes that **all lives—no matter where they are being lived—have equal value.** In light of this core belief, our vision of success for the gender impact strategy is that women are actively and meaningfully engaged as vital participants in each of our projects and that through the work of our grantees there is a visible improvement in the general welfare of households—women, children, and families—demonstrated by measured improvements in health and income.

Fundamentally, we believe that Agricultural Development must address gender in order to achieve significant impact in the reduction of hunger and poverty. This will be achieved if:

- Opportunities for women to participate in income-generating activities, learning and decision-making processes continue to increase.
- The quantity and quality of food available to women continues to increase; leading to improved health and nutrition in families because of the unique role of women in the household.
- We see increased understanding of the importance of gender dynamics in the communities where we work, among our partners, and within our programs.
- Gender emerges as a higher investment priority in agriculture among governments, multilateral institutions, and civil society through recognition that gender strategies are an essential component of successful agricultural development. Related agricultural development investment increases.



RATIONALE

The Agricultural Development strategy identifies the participation of smallholder farmers as a critical feature of our ultimate success. Women comprise the vast majority of smallholder farmers and food producers. We recognize that in most areas in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia women are afforded less status than men, have less access to resources, and have greater responsibilities given their dual reproductive and productive roles in rural households. It is our belief that to achieve dramatic and sustainable improvements in the lives and wellbeing of the smallholder farmers our initiatives must offer innovative approaches to development challenges that engage, empower and invest in women for the long term.

However, we believe that thoughtful consideration of the needs of *all* beneficiaries—women and men, girls and boys—is essential to achieving impact and project success. This means that projects must be aware of the impact that the work will have on all members of the community, especially the most vulnerable. For example, agricultural activities that increase crop yield may have a detrimental effect on the lives of adolescent girls, who are usually the first to experience increased demands on their time and labor when agricultural production intensifies, and who are the most likely to leave school to return to farm labor. It also means that we must understand that improving the lives of women improves the well-being of her children. Lastly, we affirm that reducing inequity for women and girls in the long term must also involve the inclusion of her family, her community, and the men and boys in her daily life.

Agricultural Development focuses on gender to create a more effective, transformational approach that achieves poverty reduction and hunger alleviation for all, and also improves equity between men and women. In the areas where we work women are both the majority of farmers and the most prone to experience negative impacts due to inequity in the form of unequal access to land rights, loans, income, transportation, and education. We commit to ensuring that women's' needs are thoughtfully considered and meaningfully incorporated into projects we support in order to alleviate hunger and poverty for all.

CORE BELIEFS

1. We believe that agriculture has the power to be transformative for reducing hunger and poverty in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Although, it is known that women currently provide 60-80% of the agricultural labor in our areas of focus, they have limited access to the resources and opportunities needed to maximize and profit from their contributions. These limitations constrain both female farmers' ability to improve their lives and that of their families. These limitations also constrain the transformative power of agriculture to alleviate poverty and hunger.
2. The Agriculture Development initiative recognizes that in order to achieve impact and reach our objectives, we must use every resource and tool available to ensure that women are active participants in every aspect of our work. To that end, a gender mainstreaming strategy can ensure that the practical needs and strategic interests of women and girls are considered in each proposal and that understanding the complexities of gender roles helps refine our project goals and design. Our strategy ensures that gender is at the forefront of how we conceptualize

and execute our work; that those most burdened and least empowered must be both the primary beneficiary of our resources as well as the catalyst for effecting lasting change in agricultural development.

3. Gender Impact, to us, means that women and men are actively engaged in all processes so as to allow each gender to voice needs and priorities and be heard by leaders, policy makers, and donors. This means special effort must be taken to hear from and listen to those voices most marginalized from influential networks and those least likely to have access to functioning markets and services. We believe that greater enfranchisement and participation by women and smallholder farmers will lead to improvements in health, nutrition and poverty both for women, men, and families throughout the community.

We believe the women must be leaders, actors and staffers at all levels within both the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Agricultural Development Initiative, within the organizational structures of our grantees, and within the projects we fund. However, we also recognize that representation by sex alone does not ensure that women's or men's priorities will be taken into account. We are also willing to provide the needed support, tools and resources to appropriately inform, shape, train and support the inclusion of gender in our work.

Our goal is to continue to learn from grantee experiences with these tools and adapt them on an on-going basis to ensure that our gender mainstreaming strategy is effective, efficient, meaningful, and informs the core of our organizational culture. We are open to input that would help us to refine our gender strategy to better promote improved food options and sustainable income growth.

Necessary Project Components:

The following tenets will be used to evaluate future grants in the Agricultural Development initiative. All projects are expected to meet these expectations. Projects that do not adequately address these expectations will require further thought, guidance, and revision in order to obtain or retain funding. These components will apply to most projects; however, we recognize that some may not be applicable in all cases. For example, a statement that applies to technology development may be irrelevant in grants that do not develop technology.

a) The participation of women in each project is at the optimum level to produce the greatest impact on the reduction of hunger and poverty.

b) The project strives to increase opportunities for women in income-generating activities, learning, and participation in decision-making processes.

c) The project strives to increase understanding of the importance of gender dynamics within the community where it works, within the organization itself and among the wider development community as evidenced by the inclusion of appropriate gender strategies throughout the project design, implementation and evaluation.

d) There is a structure for monitoring and evaluating measurable improvements in the welfare of women, children and families by tracking known indicators for nutrition, income and empowerment.[1]

e) The project will work to incorporate women beneficiaries as leaders and as active participants. Also, the grantee has also set appropriate targets for hiring women within its own institution and within implementing partner organizations.

[1] 'Empowerment' may be measured by two metrics; 'women's' control of agricultural decision-making' and 'women's participation in leadership positions in farmer organizations'.

f) The project's effect on labor and time has been considered from the perspective of women and girls.

g) The potential grantee is committed to listening to the concerns and needs of women as evidenced by specific milestones, processes or actions that engage women in consultation, project activities, and feedback loops.

h) The potential grantee understands the gender specific needs of the end user of the technology or product and the proposed benefit of the technology or product is intended to improve the health and welfare of women, children and families.

i) The potential grantee has a stated policy to ensure an institutional environment that is free of sexual harassment and exploitation both for grantee staff and project beneficiaries.

We recognize that in order to fulfill these expectations, gender analysis may be required. Where potential grantees have this capacity, they should undertake this analysis themselves during the planning process and throughout implementation. Where outside expertise or knowledge is needed, grantees are encouraged to discuss assistance needs with their Program Officer.

AN EFFECTIVE GENDER IMPACT STRATEGY

In order to address the complex issues inherent in gender roles and relations, the integration of these considerations must be present from the start of discussions with any potential grantee. Because we work with a wide range of partners from UN organizations to private sector research organizations, our grantees' experience with gender is varied. Likewise, these organizations manage multiple sets of partners and expectations to fund their work. Therefore, it is imperative that potential grantees have clarity around our values and expectations from the beginning of the process. The following sets of questions serve as a guide for both the Program Officer and the potential grantees as they proceed through the proposal development and implementation process:

1. What are the practical implications of the different roles and status of women, girls, men and boys in the project area for the feasibility of the project and its effective design?
2. What is the strategic potential of the project for enhancing the long term status of women and girls and promoting greater opportunities for them?[2]

These questions relate directly to our overall vision of success and if asked continually should guide the project toward successful gender integration. They provide an overarching ideal; however, gender must also be addressed in the details to make an effective contribution to the overall design and implementation of the project. Our internal proposal guidelines ask potential grantees to address a range of issues that are important to the ultimate success of the project such as potential sustainability of the work beyond the grant, means for monitoring and evaluating their work, and the capacity to undertake large scale projects. Now, of equal importance, is institutional capacity to mainstream gender into their projects, gender balance within the institution and the commitment to integrate gender throughout their grant proposal and project implementation.

A Gender Checklist will be used by Program Officers to have a constructive and targeted conversation about specific project interventions and circumstances. This document covers many facets of agriculture but has been tailored to address concerns that may arise given the specific types of work we support. We are also developing a short Gender Guide for Grantees which will address some of the fundamental guidance and techniques that are needed, including how to measure gender effectiveness through Monitoring and Evaluation. In some cases, our potential

[2] Asian Development Bank. "Gender Checklist: Agriculture". Pg. 4. 1999.

grantees may initially lack the ability or capacity to meaningfully address gender. While we see this as a challenge this gap is also an opportunity for collective learning and for the foundation's work to encourage organizations to recognize the vital role of women in agriculture.

To address this issue, we first ask potential grantees to look to the communities where they work to tap this expertise. Depending on the sector and needs, potential grantees could use local women's groups as a resource or gender experts based in the region. If this resource is not available or not sufficient, the Agricultural Development team will be able to connect grantees with a gender expert team that we have partnered with to provide advice and assistance. There will be no financial burden for the grantee to receive help. This assistance could take the form of short email exchanges or field visits depending on the stage in the process and the needs of the grantee. We are still developing this capacity for our grantees but would encourage them, in the interim, to express concern and seek help from their Program Officer.

The Agricultural Development team is working to ensure that all staff members have the capacity to address gender in their work, through training opportunities, information, and tools such as the Gender Checklist. We have hired a Program Officer with gender expertise who will be available for consultation when questions or concerns arise. We have also integrated gender into our internal grant proposal review documents, in order to ensure that reviewers critically assess the gender dimension, just as they would any other factor of success.

We are committed to providing grantees with tools and expertise to address gender appropriately and effectively. Proposals may require revision, or may be rejected, based on the potential grantee's commitment to gender integration and the specific plans they develop to achieving it. We believe this position will provide both the support and motivation for grantees to address gender as a key component of their success. It will also send a strong message to the wider community about the seriousness of our commitment to gender effectiveness. When both the Agricultural Development staff and the partners utilize all of these tools and support, we will be actively working toward our ultimate vision of success and better results within our projects.

TOOLS FOR AN EFFECTIVE GENDER STRATEGY

The tools that were introduced in the previous section are designed to fill known knowledge and resource gaps that could exist within this process. We understand that this is a learning process and that gaps may become apparent as we work. Flexibility and openness to new techniques and information will be the best response to this. The following section will describe the primary tools that are available to strengthen our grant-making. They are the Gender Checklist, Proposal and Review Templates, and the Necessary Project Components List.

Gender Checklist

The Gender Checklist was initially developed internally to aid gender mainstreaming within grants. Later, through a joint effort between the International Centre for Research on Women and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) it was expanded and updated. It has been modified through consultation with internal staff and it caters directly to the work of our projects. The Checklist is designed to cover a wide range of activities and it allows the Program Officer and potential grantee to consider both the structure and design of the proposal as well as its proper management. As many of our teams work on similar issues or coordinate their work, we have strived to create a holistic and singular document.

The checklist is intended to facilitate a dialogue between a Program Officer and potential grantees and establish expectations and considerations with regard to gender. Potential grantees will be asked to think about the following categories: the gender and gender specific needs of their beneficiaries, the roles of men and women in the agricultural system and in the household, how men and women participate differently in the technology innovation process, gender differences in resources and services, differences in access and impact of new technologies, distribution of income benefits, farmer organizations, institutional capacity, Monitoring & Evaluation, risks, opportunities, advocacy and budget.

Because the checklist is detailed, it is the responsibility of the Program Officer to raise the issues that are relevant to the particular project. The checklist asks open-ended questions to facilitate dialogue and also has additional follow-up questions to probe deeper in particularly pertinent areas. If utilized, it will be a powerful tool that can facilitate gender integration into all aspects and stages of the project. The checklist will be further tailored so that it meets the diverse needs of all of the sub-initiative areas, namely Science and Technology, Farmer Productivity, Market Access, and our newest area, Policy and Statistics.

Proposal and Proposal Review Templates

The proposal template is the primary tool we use to guide potential grantees through the grant making process. The questions in this document help the foundation and the grantee to envision and justify the project while also creating a road map for how impact will be achieved and measured. Because of our commitment to gender, questions specifically related to this dimension have been integrated throughout the document. Below is an example of one question from this document:

"How will your project specifically address gender inequity in agricultural development such as inequity in decision-making, appropriate technology, women's access to knowledge and financial services and control of assets?"

In addition to project shaping questions, like the one above, we have integrated questions that ask about the preparedness of the organization to undertake gender as a component of their success, the gender balance of their staff, and their plans for capturing the effects of their project on both women and men. While these questions are quite broad, we feel they emphasize our commitment to gender as one component of many that will determine whether or not the project positively impacts hunger and poverty.

We have similarly amended our internal proposal review documents to reflect our commitments. Members of the agricultural development initiative are asked to address a number of issues that they feel will affect success, including gender. In this document questions not only summarize potential grantee responses to the questions in the proposal, but also allow Program Officers to delve more deeply into subtleties, such as the shaping of the proposal over time. If a potential grantee initially lacked capacity to address gender but then showed willingness and openness to learn, this could be illustrated through the Program Officer description of the proposal development process. The document also allows justification for important gender milestones and targets outlined in the proposal. These templates and the Gender Checklist should help both grantees and Program Officers to meet the expectations deemed necessary project components, described next.



Necessary Project Components

The purpose of the Checklist of Necessary Project Components is a tool for helping us transfer our commitment to effective gender strategy from theory to implementation and impact. We are investing significant resources and time to provide tools and support to both our grantees and internal staff with the understanding that we value gender mainstreaming and we expect it to be integrated within all projects. With this in mind, proposals will be reviewed against these statements which are designed to establish whether or not the project proposal has demonstrated a thoughtful consideration and commitment to gender integration. Where there are concerns, the Director will consult with the Program Officer to determine a means for resolving outstanding issues. Willingness to work with Program Officers and external resources to rectify areas of key concern, improves the likelihood that we will fund a project proposal. Conversely, a lack of willingness to address gender strategies in a meaningful and measurable way decreases the likelihood that we will provide funding for that institution. Our theory of change holds that carefully addressing gender will improve the impact of all agricultural projects, and as such is integral to reducing hunger and poverty. We cannot accurately test our theory without the participation of all projects.

1) The participation of women in each project at the optimum level to produce the greatest impact on the reduction of hunger and poverty.

Past efforts to mainstream gender have often relied on notions of equality or quotas which do not always yield the greatest benefits. This question asks the applicant and the Program Officer to consider how the participation of women will affect the project and its ultimate success. Because it identifies participation, it implies that women should be both implementers of the project and beneficiaries. However, it does not set hard and fast percentages for every project. In this regard, it requires critical analysis on the part of the Program Officer and the potential grantee to identify the gender balance that will lead to optimal project effectiveness.

Given the definition of *"optimum"* as 'the best or most favorable point, degree, or amount that is most favorable or advantageous,' the importance of women's participation will vary from project to project given the wide scope of our work. Careful determination of this as it relates to our beneficiaries is critical to our work. It also should be critical for our grantees which endeavor to undertake the most effective work possible. We understand that optimum levels of women's participation may never have been defined before. We expect our grantees to seek their own answer to the question, "What is the optimum level of participation by women in this project to produce the greatest impact on the reduction of hunger and poverty?" and provide a rationale as to why their project is 'optimized' in this regard.

For example, in a project that has a significant extension component where women are 80%

of the beneficiary population, it would not be optimal to only have 20% female extension agents, particularly if there were cultural constraints that discourage women from interacting with men. The success of the project is determined by how well information is transmitted to beneficiaries, in which case, the proportion of female extension agents must be much higher. In contrast, in some agricultural science fields there are distinctly fewer women scientists in certain areas of expertise. Where women comprise a small minority it is difficult to demand that 50% of the grantee staff be women. It is also potentially damaging to the overall work of the project, as this requirement could delay the advancement of much needed technology.

We acknowledge the very different realities faced by our vast array of grantees. This is not to say that we accept them as situations that cannot be changed; in fact, we currently are supporting a grant for African Women in Agricultural Research and Design (AWARD) through the Gender and Diversity Program. The project provides fellowships to women in the agricultural sciences to ensure that the next generation of R&D for African agricultural development is inclusive of women's voices.

2) The project strives to increase opportunities for women in income-generating activities, learning, and participation in decision-making.

We recognize the importance of access to income-generating activities, learning and participation in decision making. These three areas are important for leveraging the powerful role women could have in implementing agricultural transformation. In order for women to contribute meaningfully in their communities and in agriculture, they need opportunities to engage in financially viable labor so they can have the ability to improve their well-being and that of their families. They also need access to learning opportunities to be effective participants in their communities, whether it is through agricultural extension or basic literacy and numeracy programs. Finally, women need to be able apply their knowledge in decision-making roles for the betterment of their households and communities. Generally, women have less access to these opportunities but men must be part of the dialogue and the solution. Including men in the process of increasing these opportunities for women is essential to obtain increased women's participation in projects and reduce the likelihood of discomfort in the community. We know that a standard level of achievement in these areas is not possible for all grantees and partners. However, all grantees can work to increase access to these opportunities, regardless of their experience or context at the start of the project. We ask our grantees to set milestones within their project that will continue to raise the bar and lead to the general improvement of opportunities for women and girls in income-generating activities, learning and participation in decision making in the long term.

3) The project strives to increase understanding of the importance of gender dynamics within the community where it works, within the organization itself and among the wider development community as evidenced by the inclusion of appropriate gender strategies throughout the project design.

Although gender may not be a focus for all grantees, effectiveness is. Therefore we will work to increase understanding of gender policy not merely as a requirement for funding, but as a critical element of success.

We posit that an increased understanding of gender dynamics will dramatically increase the impact and effectiveness of grantees' programs and works in both directions along a continuum:

improving agriculture and improving the lives of smallholder farmers. Leveraging awareness of gender constraints and opportunities will create high impact delivery within agriculture. Conversely, leveraging improvements in agriculture can reduce gender constraints and improve opportunities.

Increasing understanding and acceptance could be achieved through a number of different mechanisms such as training of staff and community leaders, greater inclusion of women in leadership in project related activities, and greater consultation with women. One likely side effect of using the gender checklist will be increased awareness of gender issues in agriculture. However, we would like to challenge ourselves and our grantees to share that awareness in their broader community context.

4) The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) goals measure improvements in the welfare of women, children and families by establishing health and income indicators disaggregated by gender.

The ultimate goal of our work is to reduce poverty and hunger in the developing world through interventions in Agricultural Development. Gender is a dimension of our work in this area and thus, must contribute to our goal. We want to ensure that our grantees have a means for measuring their success by adopting measurable indicators related to health and income. The Agricultural Development team has been working to establish common indicators of success that align with our goals of reducing hunger and poverty. Grantees can consult with their Program Officers to understand how to integrate these measures into their monitoring and evaluation plans for the project. These indicators will need to disaggregate data by gender in order to measure impact, whether intended or unintended. Some of these indicators will also capture impacts on children, which will allow us to analyze how our projects affect girls and boys. Gender-disaggregated monitoring and evaluation is important because having standard measures of how our work has affected both women and men strengthens individual projects. It helps our grantees tell the story of how their projects are making an impact. It also helps us piece together the bigger picture how gender impacts the intersection between agricultural development and global development. The specific indicators and methodologies will eventually be articulated in a more detailed manner in our Guide for Grantees which is currently being developed.

5. The project works to incorporate women beneficiaries as leaders and as active participants. In addition, the grantee has also set adequate hiring targets for hiring women within the institution itself and among implementing partners.

Many of our grantees work directly with beneficiaries through farmer organizations and other community level groups. Some even establish these groups through the work of the project. Because women comprise the majority of small holder farmers in the areas where we work, it is necessary that women not only participate in these organizations but also are able to participate in leadership roles. In thinking about this point, grantees should consider the constraints on time that many women have; child rearing, gathering water/firewood and the restrictions and difficulties they often face when traveling.

Gender balance among grantee staff interacting with project beneficiaries is also important. It is not sufficient to 'include' women on projects in strictly administrative and support roles. Women must be integrated throughout all levels of the grantee organization, including within

the leadership to adequately address the needs of women in the communities where they work and ensure that women have a greater voice within our projects. Including women at all levels of project implementation will likely improve successful implementation of projects, improve uptake of new technologies, generate innovative approaches, and reduce the number of projects that fail on account of failure to address the needs of the vast majority of small holder farmers.

Through consultation with our Program Officers and the Gender Advisory Team (when necessary) the grantee should develop a sense for what is an appropriate and achievable gender balance. The Program Officer and the grantee should work to identify a target that is reasonable and appropriate to the project's goals. In some cases, planning grants might be helpful to aid the organization with these determinations and gender analysis. In NGOs and like partners, when significant hiring is going to occur to fulfill the needs of the project, our grantees should strive to hire fifty percent women. We will absolutely insist on a minimum of thirty percent at all levels and require a strategy for increasing this number. Where grantees are working with implementing partners, the grantee should work to hold their partners accountable to these standards.

We acknowledge that within some organizations we work with, such as research-based organizations, these requirements might be prohibitively rigorous. As such, we must still encourage organizations to be proactive in seeking alternative methods for optimizing the gender balance. In particular, we are willing to fund an additional component within the grant to provide internships, mentoring and graduate level research opportunities for women within the organization as they relate to the project objectives. In doing so, we encourage grantees to keep the project's goals at the center of their focus and also make a significant contribution to gender in their field. Together, we will lay the groundwork to ensure that in the future women have the opportunity, training, and critical mass to make a significant contribution to agricultural research and policy.

6) The labor and time implications of the proposed work of the project have been considered from the perspective of women and girls.

It is well documented that women in the developing world have many strains on their time and also a heavy labor burden. Most of our projects work to reduce labor and time strain which should reduce the load for all farmers, including women. However, we are also working to increase productivity and participation in markets in many ways. It is important that our potential grantees use a critical eye to make sure that projects do not intentionally or unintentionally increase the labor or time burden on women. The Gender Checklist is designed to assist potential grantees and Program Officers in addressing this point.

7) The potential grantee is committed to listening to the concerns and needs of women as evidenced by specific milestones, processes or actions that engage women in consultation, ensure inclusion in project activities, and allow for feedback loops to provide course adjustments for project.

As women comprise the majority of smallholder farmers, it is important that grantees listen to their concerns and needs from the project development phase through implementation. This can be done formally through focus groups, surveys or gender analysis or more informally depending on the nature of the project. We encourage organizations operating in communities

to consult local women's groups. These activities can be built into the design and milestones for the grant. When grantees listen to women during implementation and create feedback loops this strengthens the project and helps grantees keep commitments made during the design of their evaluation strategy. These feedback loops have the potential to have a positive effect on women's empowerment while also increasing the greater community's understanding of the unique challenges and responsibilities of women. The lessons learned by our grantees through this communicative process will also help us to learn improve our approach as well.

8) The potential grantee understands the gender specific needs of the end user of the technology or product and the proposed benefit is intended to improve the health and welfare of women, children and families.

This question elaborates on the previous question and asks that grantees working in research and development consider the concerns and desires of their end users. In many cases there are crops which are grown, marketed or used predominantly by a particular gender, such as men's involvement in cash crops or women's involvement in food crops. Women are also generally the food preparers, which needs to be taken into account when developing varieties of subsistence crops by taking into account taste preferences, and relative ease of preparation or impact on labor. Close consultation with the ultimate beneficiary will help prevent the development of a variety that is not adopted due to lack of consultation and consideration of the users needs. The other important component of this question asks the grantee to make the link between the development of their technology or product and the improved welfare and health of women, children and families. In our view, even high level research and development needs to be grounded in the context of how that research will contribute to our shared goal of hunger and poverty alleviation.

9) The potential grantee has a stated policy to ensure an institutional environment that is free from harassment or discrimination based on gender.

While we believe that our grantees employ staff of the highest integrity, we also feel that it is important that grantees are committed, in writing, to providing a safe and productive environment for their staff and beneficiaries.

INFORMATION AND EXPERT ADVICE

Even though we are offering numerous tools, it is integral to the success of these measures that there is a significant implementation support structure. It starts with us. We have provided introductory training to our team and as we progress, we will identify gaps in knowledge and create learning and training opportunities to address them. In addition, we now have a Program Officer on our team with extensive gender experience. This person is a resource for team members and can offer advice and technical assistance when needed, but is not intended to act as a substitute for each Program Officer owning their role in gender integration.

In addition to building our own knowledge and capacity, we intend to offer to build up our grantees knowledge and capacity, where needed. We first encourage potential grantees to seek local expertise and advice. However, what is needed may not always have a local solution. To meet this need, we will engage a specialized organization with capacity in the areas to help our grantees to build their

knowledge and capacity both in the short-term, to address project design, but also in the long-term, to transform the way they think about gender in their work. We anticipate that this group could assist the grantee with understanding how to perform practical activities such as structuring M&E strategies to effectively capture gender differences, designing strategies for recruiting women, providing training for staff and a host of other services. In addition, this approach should allow us to learn about both difficulties and best practices.

Lastly, we intend to invest in the broader agricultural development community. We know that the transformations in poverty and hunger that we seek cannot be achieved alone. We therefore will look for opportunities to support and strengthen gender expertise and effectiveness within the field of agricultural development.

REVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

This strategy is our first effort toward integrating gender in a thoughtful and meaningful way in agricultural development. We feel this is absolutely critical to our success or failure and we are committed to approaching the subject with both rigor and openness to learning. As a program, we seek to put the beneficiary at the center of all of our efforts, and given the high participation of women in agriculture this often means putting women at the center of our work. As the team uses these tools there will likely be a need for additional consultation and fine-tuning. We will also work to make the tools and resources yet to be developed, such as a Gender Advisory Team, available to our grantees as soon as possible. We anticipate revisions of the document based on internal and external feedback on an annual basis, with the first revision tentatively scheduled for the 2nd Quarter of 2009.

Incorporating gender considerations has the potential to not only increase effectiveness and sustainability but to also to change paradigms, which is why we must be deliberate and committed as we proceed. The effect of this commitment has the potential to transform not only our work but also the larger field of development. We believe like-minded organizations will join us in service to the greater goal of reducing poverty and hunger by carefully monitoring, evaluating, learning, and designing strategies that address how your projects are affected by gender. As we proceed we will learn, share and adapt. We ask that others do the same, so we can improve our own strategies for reducing hunger and poverty.