



Transforming Gender Relations in Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa

Cathy Farnworth, Melinda Fones Sundell, Akinyi Nzioki,
Violet Shivutse, and Marion Davis

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Foreword

This book is the result of a process to better understand the role of gender in agriculture that was initiated by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in 2009. Recognizing the importance of empowering women farmers, Sida commissioned a study of the gender aspects of five of its major agricultural programmes.¹ The case studies from Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nicaragua and Zambia, and the accompanying umbrella analysis, highlighted many difficulties in working towards greater gender equality in agricultural development programmes, but it also revealed a number of valuable lessons and promising approaches.

Sida organized a seminar to present the findings of the report in the spring of 2010. At that seminar it became apparent that the findings, particularly in relation to successful approaches and their underlying reasons, needed to be spread to as wide an audience as possible. The Swedish International Agricultural Network Initiative (SIANI) agreed to organize a seminar in April 2011 entitled “Why Women Matter in Agriculture” to begin exploring avenues of further development. Discussion at that seminar made it clear that most everyone (from private, public, academic and civil society organizations) could agree that women matter a great deal in agriculture, and particularly with regard to food security in an African context. Participants were eager to move beyond the analysis of the past and look towards devising mechanisms for changing attitudes and roles – all of this in the overall context of agricultural sector growth and poverty alleviation.

SIANI then organized a four day “writeshop” with 20 participants facilitated with the World Café methodology.² The participants came from a wide range of institutions: bilateral and multilateral donors, academics, private-sector consultants and NGOs. All had field experience in agricultural development in Africa, and over half currently worked in African organizations.

The basic structure of the book and the references for case studies were generated by this writeshop, although it became clear that we had only scratched the surface of what could be said about successful approaches to transforming gender roles in agriculture. A smaller group was formed to edit the proceedings of the writeshop, which grew into a greater task as colleagues who had not attended also contributed interesting case studies. We also became aware of the need to include analytical

1 See Farnworth, C. R. (2010). *Gender Aware Approaches in Agricultural Programmes: A Study of Sida-supported Agricultural Programmes*. Sida Evaluation 2010:3. Stockholm. <http://www.sida.se/Global/About%20Sida/Sida%20Utv%c3%a4rderingar/Gender%20in%20Agriculture%20Evaluation%202010-3.pdf>.

2 See <http://www.theworldcafe.com>.

frameworks and a structure that would help readers “invent” new approaches – drawing on the successful examples, but tailored to their particular situations.

In the end, many participated in the production of this book; we have noted them all as contributing authors. We are also fortunate that several others agreed to review individual chapters to ensure accuracy and relevancy, or to provide photographs from their work all across Africa.

We hope that this book will serve as both a source of inspiration, and a rough guide to what can work in designing and implementing agricultural development efforts that empower women and men alike.

Our greatest thanks go to Anita Ingevall at Sida, who provided much of the inspiration and support for this project. We dedicate this book to her memory.

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Helien Altir, a farmer in Turkana, Kenya, works the land. © European Commission, DoE ECHO, Flickr.