



GEM Digest of the Month for November 1, 2013

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Late October afternoon in Manitoba Courtesy of C. Murray.

The Gender Equality Mainstreaming (GEM) Working Group of the Agricultural Institute of Canada (AIC) gathers information and articles on an ongoing basis on gender equality mainstreaming within agriculture, scientific research, rural development, climate change and organizational development. Information is shared with members, partners, scientific societies and member organizations. The views and opinions presented are not necessarily representative of AIC.

If you have information to share, please send it to dinah.ceplis@gmail.com to compile and re-distribute once a month. Back issues of the GEM Digest are available at <http://www.aic.ca/gender/resources.cfm>.

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Opportunities and Upcoming Events

1. Associated Country Women of the World

<http://www.acww.org.uk/acww-projects.html>

The Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) supports women in their efforts to reduce poverty, improve health, and advance education through 460 member societies active in over 70 countries.

- Projects in the "Water for All Fund" address water, sanitation, and hygiene.
- Projects in "Women Feed the World Fund" include support for progressive farming techniques, and upgrading women’s skills in agriculture.

Applications from member societies should be completed no later than 30 November 2013. Applications from non-member organizations should be **submitted 01-31 January 2014**.

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2. Women's World Summit Foundation -- Prize for Women's Creativity in Rural Life 2014

http://www.woman.ch/index.php?page=nomination-guidelines&hl=en_US

The Prize honors women and women's groups anywhere in the world exhibiting creativity, courage, and commitment for improving the quality of life in rural communities. WWSF aims to draw international attention to laureates' contributions to sustainable development, household food security, and peace. The Prize provides an award of US\$1 thousand per laureate, and US\$3 thousand for specific African women's organizations. Nominations are due **30 April 2014**.

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This Month’s News

1. World Food Prize Laureate to Donate Award to Support Advancement of Women in Plant Science

<http://ca.finance.yahoo.com/news/world-food-prize-laureate-dr-200000552.html>

World Food Prize 2013 laureate Dr. Robert T. Fraley, Monsanto's executive vice president and chief technology officer, today announced that both he and Monsanto will match his share of the World Food Prize award to establish the Fraley-Borlaug Scholars in Plant Science scholarship.

The scholarship will fund **female students at the University of Illinois** who are studying **plant breeding and biotechnology**. The matches will bring the total initial endowment to the University's College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences to \$250,000.

Fraley, an alumnus of the University of Illinois, made the announcement as part of the 2013 World Food Prize. The World Food Prize awarded Fraley and fellow 2013 laureates Dr. Marc Van Montagu and Dr. Mary-Dell Chilton for their world-changing achievements in founding, developing and applying modern agricultural biotechnology.

"The advances being made in breeding, biotechnology and agronomics to improve crop yields are truly amazing – but, our work isn't done," Fraley said. "Through the Fraley-Borlaug Scholars fund, we're making an investment in the future to unlock the potential in the next generation of female scientists who will continue to drive innovation in safe and sustainable food production. Women are underrepresented in this scientific community today, yet they also make up the majority of smallholder farmers around the world and stand to gain the most from current and future innovations in plant science."

Refer to the link for the complete article.

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2. Why Are There Still So few Women in Science?

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/06/magazine/why-are-there-still-so-few-women-in-science.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&

Eileen Pollack has posted an article about women in sciences and the stereotypes they face. She is working on a book about women in the sciences.

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3. Rural women deserve more than simply recognition

<http://www.ipolitics.ca/2013/10/14/rural-women-deserve-more-than-simply-recognition/>

October 15 marks **International Day of Rural Women**, which recognizes the contributions and critical role of rural women, including indigenous women, in "enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security, and eradicating rural poverty".

On this day, we should all recognize the fundamental role Canadian women play in the rural economies of our great country, as well as the hardships they face and their requirements to succeed and thrive.

Rural women contribute through helping in crop production and livestock care, providing food for their families, and undertaking off-farm activities to increase their families' livelihoods. Moreover, they care for children, the elderly and the sick.

But they also face challenges, including geographic and social isolation, a lack of accessible and confidential health care services, an insufficient number of shelters and services for those who have been victims of abuse, a deficiency of employment opportunities, and a lack of public transportation. Other challenges include lack of access to high-speed

internet, which impacts economic development and essential services such as distance learning. Aboriginal women also suffer the continuing effects of colonization and residential schools.

Today in Canada, one in five women live in a rural area, but only two per cent live on farms. In stark contrast, almost half (47 per cent) of all Aboriginal women in Canada live in rural areas.

Refer to the link for the complete article.

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4. Swedish co-op creates a stake for women in wind industry

<http://www.boell.org/climate-transatlantic/index-389.html>

FALKÖPING, SWEDEN—When Wanja Wallemyr learned a community wind project would be built a few kilometers from her family farm, she knew she wanted to be a part of it.

Only problem: she couldn't afford the 1 million Swedish Krona (roughly \$154,000) minimum investment on her own. That was in 2007, just as the farmer and rural activist was also preparing to attend a regional conference on creating economic opportunities for women.

With both issues on her mind, she came up with a single solution: Wallemyr would start an all-women wind energy cooperative. It turned into a two-week sprint. She had just 14 days to commit to joining the wind project or not. Starting with other women at the conference, Wallemyr found nine others to join her in forming Qvinnovindar.

In an industry whose leadership still skews heavily towards men, it's very likely Qvinnovindar is the only company of its kind anywhere in the world. Last week, the company received a regional cooperative of the year award, and it's been nominated for a similar prize at the national level.

Refer to the link for the complete article.

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5. Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan wants OSC to force firms to add female directors

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/companies-should-have-3-women-directors-or-face-delisting-teachers/article14721742/#dashboard/follows/>

The giant Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan wants the province's securities regulator to require all public companies to have at least three women on their boards, saying a voluntary option is unlikely to have much impact.

Teachers outlined its bold proposal in a letter submitted Friday to the Ontario Securities Commission, saying companies that fail to have at least three female directors after a transition period – which it suggests setting at 2020 – should be delisted from the Toronto Stock Exchange.

The idea goes far beyond a “comply or explain” policy proposed by the OSC to boost the number of women on Canadian boards by asking companies to voluntarily report each year their efforts to improve board diversity or else explain why they have opted not to make the disclosure. The OSC proposal has been seeking public comment since July with the comment period closing Friday.

Refer to the link for the complete article.

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6. U.N.'s Top Posts Remain a Boy's Club

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/10/u-n-s-top-posts-remain-a-boys-club/>

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 8 2013 (IPS) - Despite adopting scores of pious resolutions on gender empowerment over the last 67 years, the 193-member General Assembly has failed to practice in its own backyard what it has vigorously preached to the outside world.

So far, the U.N.'s highest policy making body has elected only three women as its president since 1946: Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit of India (1953), Angie Brooks of Liberia (1969) and Sheikha Haya Rasheed al-Khalifa of Bahrain (2006).

In a letter addressed to over 160 world leaders, who were at the United Nations last week, the New York-based Impact Leadership 21 has called for meaningful steps in establishing "the rights of women and the equality of their participation at all decision-making levels".

More specifically, the letter makes a strong case for a woman as the next U.N. secretary-general (UNSG) when Ban Ki-moon finishes his current term at the end of 2016.

Refer to the link for the complete article.

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7. Address Africa's gender gap to end extreme poverty

<http://www.thewhig.com/2013/10/10/address-africas-gender-gap-to-end-extreme-poverty>

The World Bank aims to change the world by eradicating the scourge of extreme poverty within a generation. But to achieve that laudable goal, the Bretton Woods institution and its 188 member states will need to find ways to empower female farmers in the impoverished sub-Saharan region of Africa.

Farming drives Africa's economy, generating about 32% of the continent's collective Gross Domestic Product. Clearly, agriculture must be the central focus of any credible extreme poverty reduction strategy. Neglecting the sector would be a recipe for failure. [...]

The FAO offers a number of policy recommendations to reduce the gender gap in agriculture. First, the elimination of discrimination against women in access to education, financial services and agricultural inputs should be policy priorities for the governments of developing nations, donor countries and non-governmental organizations.

Second, the UN agency is pushing for investments in "labour-saving and productivity enhancing technologies and infrastructure to free women's time for more productive activities."

Third, the FAO recommends that developing nations and donors work together "to ensure that agricultural policies and programmes are gender-aware, and to make women's voices heard as equal partners for sustainable development."

If the world hopes to eliminate extreme poverty, it must first address gender discrimination and sexual violence in sub-Saharan Africa.

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8. OP-ED: Sustainable Development Goals After 2015

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/09/op-ed-sustainable-development-goals-after-2015/>

UNITED NATIONS, Sep 25 2013 (IPS) - Reducing the proportion of undernourished people by half until 2015 was one of the Millennium Development Goals that the international community set in 2000. It will not be reached: At least 870 million people worldwide – and one child in five – still go hungry; this in a world where we already produce enough food today to feed nine billion people in 2050.

Further progress towards reaching this goal can be made in the remaining months, but we must ask ourselves what comes afterwards. The debate on the so-called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to be reached by 2030, has already begun.

Defeating hunger remains a priority. This is not simply a matter of providing everyone with enough food; crucial for the future of all human beings is how this should happen.

“Food security and nutrition for all through sustainable agriculture and food systems” must be set as one of the fundamental goals of global development. It is therefore imperative for agricultural policy to change course, as requested in 2008 by IAASTD, the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development. The same message was reiterated in the Rio+20 Declaration “The Future We Want”.

Refer to the link for the complete article.

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Reports, Publications and Resources

1. Gender Resource Guide from ELDIS

<http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/gender#.UmQgcWqEhMs>

The purpose of this guide is to provide access to relevant, diverse and credible research on the role of gender equality issues in achieving development goals. It aims to inform dialogue, learning and the sharing of good practice around areas such as gender mainstreaming, measuring change, legal and policy frameworks on gender and human rights, and successful initiatives from the field.

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2. Transforming Gender Relations in Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/?doc=66059>

This book from the Stockholm Environment Institute is based in the premise that empowered women and men are more successful farmers who are more able to make the most of the opportunities around them. It argues that there is a causal relation between more equal gender relations in the household and in the community, and better agricultural outcomes. Standard development interventions such as more extension services, better information, more fertilizer, better machinery – will not fully achieve their goals unless women and men are on equal footing and unhindered by gender norms that limit what is ‘appropriate’ from them to do or be.

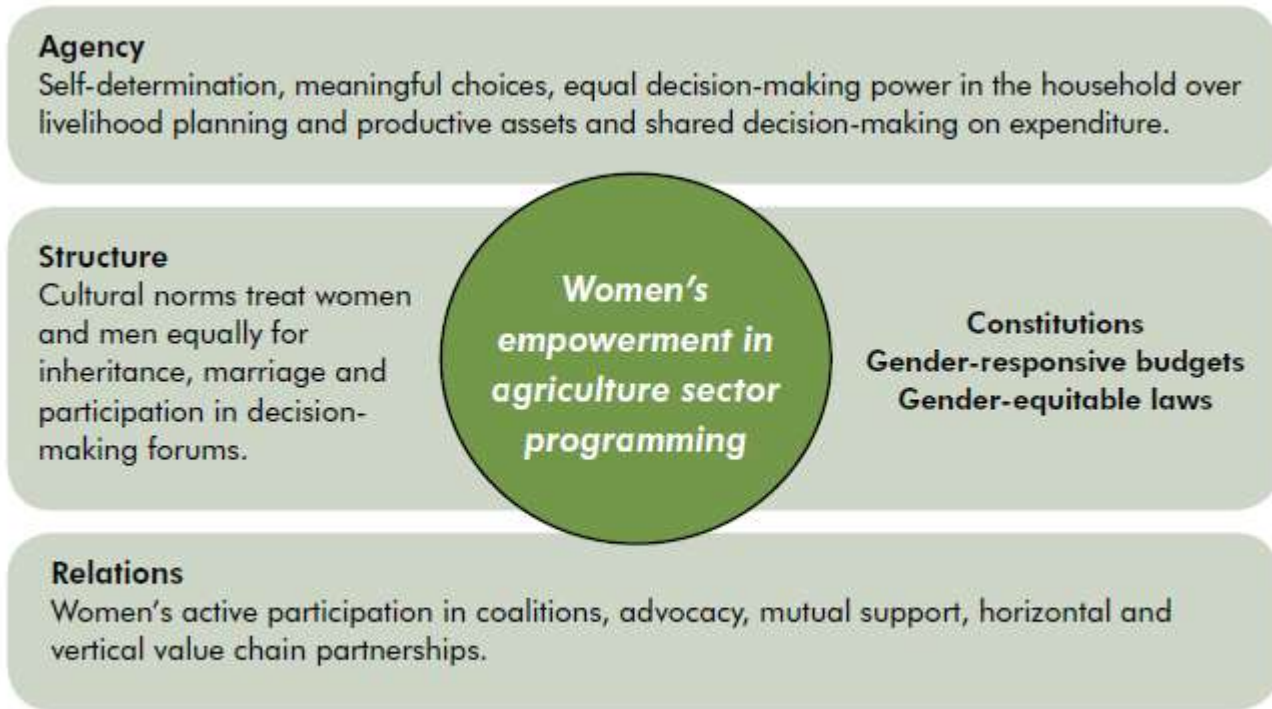


FIGURE 2.1 Three empowerment dimensions

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3. The Role of Women in Agriculture: Perceptions of Iraqi Extension Agents

Access to Agricultural Inputs, Technology and Information, Communicating with Farmers, and the Role of Women in Agriculture: Perceptions of Iraqi Extension Agents

<https://aiaee.org/vol-201-spring-13/1493-access-to-agricultural-inputs-technology-and-information-communicating-with-farmers-and-the-role-of-women-in-agriculture-perceptions-of-iraqi-extension-agents.html>

Abstract

The goal of this study was to gain a more comprehensive understanding of access to inputs, technology and information available to Iraqi extension agents, and to ascertain current farmer communication strategies and gender roles within the diverse Iraq agricultural extension system. The conflicts, government policies, and economic sanctions that have enveloped Iraq over the last several decades have significantly impacted access to agricultural resources. Iraqi extension personnel participating in the Iraq Agricultural Extension Revitalization (IAER) program provided their perspective on the availability of agricultural supplies, technology and related information. About two-thirds of the extension agents indicated that the flow and availability of agricultural supplies has become less restricted and generally felt that there was greater access to basic agricultural information compared to the previous decade. Despite perceiving noticeable improvement overall in access to agricultural supplies and technology, over 83% of the program attendees agreed that access to agricultural inputs was currently insufficient to successfully promote productive agricultural practices. An overwhelming preference for face-to-face communication by both farmers and extension personnel also limits the extent to which agricultural information can be disseminated. In addition, several regional and gender-based differences emerged. Notably, it appears that farmers do not approach female extension personnel equally, wherein better educated farmers are more likely to interact with female extension agents. We suggest that an approach based on a horizontal exchange of knowledge between extension personnel

and local farmers, coupled with a better integration of women extension personnel, will help a revitalized Iraqi extension system achieve greater agricultural sustainability.

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4. Rice, gender, and social dynamics: setting the stage for women

<http://www.cgiar.org/consortium-news/rice-gender-and-social-dynamics-setting-the-stage-for-women/>

A report by the CGIAR Research Program on Rice highlights outcomes of the program's work to break down gender barriers for women rice farmers in Asia and Africa, who undertake much of the production labor, including postharvest processes like drying and milling.

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5. Discussion Paper: Women's Empowerment and Nutrition – An Evidence Review

<http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/ifpridp01294.pdf>

A new IFPRI Discussion Paper, *Women's Empowerment and Nutrition: An Evidence Review*, by Mara van den Bold, Agnes Quisumbing, and Stuart Gillespie reviews the evidence on women's empowerment and nutrition. Many development programs that aim to alleviate poverty and improve investments in human capital consider women's empowerment a key pathway by which to achieve impact and often target women as their main beneficiaries. Despite this, women's empowerment dimensions are often not rigorously measured and are at times merely assumed.

This paper starts by reflecting on the concept and measurement of women's empowerment and then reviews some of the structural interventions that aim to influence underlying gender norms in society and eradicate gender discrimination. It then proceeds to review the evidence of the impact of three types of interventions—(1) cash transfer programs, (2) agricultural interventions, and (3) microfinance programs—on women's empowerment, nutrition, or both.

- Qualitative evidence on conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs generally points to positive impacts on women's empowerment, although quantitative research findings are more heterogeneous. CCT programs produce mixed results on long-term nutritional status, and very limited evidence exists of their impacts on micronutrient status. The little evidence available on unconditional cash transfers (UCT) indicates mixed impacts on women's empowerment and positive impacts on nutrition; however, recent reviews comparing CCT and UCT programs have found little difference in terms of their effects on stunting and they have found that conditionality is less important than other factors, such as access to healthcare and child age and sex. Evidence of cash transfer program impacts depending on the gender of the transfer recipient or on the conditionality is also mixed, although CCTs with non-health conditionalities seem to have negative impacts on nutritional status. The impacts of programs based on the gender of the transfer recipient show mixed results, but almost no experimental evidence exists of testing gender-differentiated impacts of a single program.
- Agricultural interventions—specifically home gardening and dairy projects—show mixed impacts on women's empowerment measures such as time, workload, and control over income; but they demonstrate very little impact on nutrition. Implementation modalities are shown to determine differential impacts in terms of empowerment and nutrition outcomes.

- With regard to the impact of microfinance on women’s empowerment, evidence is also mixed, although more recent reviews do not find any impact on women’s empowerment. The impact of microfinance on nutritional status is mixed, with no evidence of impact on micronutrient status.
- Across all three types of programs (cash transfer programs, agricultural interventions, and microfinance programs), very little evidence exists on pathways of impact, and evidence is often biased toward a particular region.

The paper ends with a discussion of the findings and remaining evidence gaps and an outline of recommendations for research.

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6. The Post-2015 Framework: Merging Care and Green Economy Approaches to Finance Gender-Equitable Sustainable Development

http://www.boell.org/web/147-Liane-Schalatek_Post-2015-Framework-Finance-Gender-Equitable-Sustainable-Development.html

One year after the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), commonly referred to a “Rio +20” elaborated on the global community’s shared understanding of “the future we want”, follow up processes have started to sketch out possible outlines of a post-2015 framework with a set of sustainable development goals (SDG) as likely successor to the millennium development goal process (MDG), which ends in 2015.

Gender-equitable sustainable development approaches will be key to addressing the shortcomings of the MDG process, which largely failed for significantly reduce persistent poverty and inequalities, including between men and women, in a natural environment that is overstressed, continues to be depleted in the name of economic growth and development and taken as a given.

This paper analyses the shortcomings of the MDG approach in addressing challenges to gender equality stemming from environmental degradation, including climate change. It argues that in order to succeed, truly sustainable development needs the marrying of the care economy which recognizes and accounts for primarily women’s unpaid social reproduction and care burden with the instruments of a green economy approach that internalizes and values (not necessarily prizes and commodifies) the use of environmental resources. Making development and climate finance processes and mechanisms more democratic and gender-responsive and devoting significant resources to interventions targeting gender equality and women’s empowerment is a key with is necessary to translate states’ rhetorical commitment into concrete policy actions.

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