

Plantwise Gender Strategy

Summary document

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Background to the Gender Strategy

This strategy seeks to ensure that gender is mainstreamed throughout the Plantwise programme and that programme activities are conducted in a way that promotes gender equality.

Mainstreaming gender is not the same thing as focusing on or prioritising women. It entails understanding the priorities, constraints, and needs of different groups (men, women, old, young, etc) and ensuring that these are taken into account in project decision making, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The essence of gender mainstreaming is to make the invisible, visible, not just at household level, but within the household as well. Societies are not homogenous, and factors such as gender, age, class, ethnicity, and disability shape the agricultural practices and extension needs of different groups, as well as their ability to access different types of services and sources of information. Seeking the views of different segments of society and incorporating an awareness and analysis of these differences throughout the project cycle is essential to ensuring that Plantwise is able to provide equitable benefits for all farmers and their families, including those who are often left behind by gender-blind approaches to extension.

Some Key Definitions

Gender – Gender is a set of socially constructed roles associated with being male and female. This encompasses differences in economic, social, and political resources and responsibilities, livelihood strategies, and a wide range of other factors within a given society. Gender is context-dependent, varying between cultures and across time, and interacts with social attributes such as age, class, or ethnicity to shape the opportunities and constraints faced by individuals. It is a tool to understand how a society is organised. Gender is not the same as sex, which refers to the biological differences between men and women.

Gender equality – Gender equality is the equal enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. The aim is not that women and men become the same, but that their opportunities and life chances become and remain equal¹.

Gender equity – Gender equity is fairness in treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. It may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities².

Gender mainstreaming – Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality⁴.

Gender awareness – Gender awareness is the conscious knowledge that people and communities are not homogenous. Programmes and projects that are *gender blind* do not see the differences between gender roles, including the gender division of labour and skills. If a project is *gender neutral*, it recognises the differences between genders but takes no action to address these differences. *Gender sensitive* projects will recognise the differences and advocate about these differences, while *gender responsive* projects will not only recognise the differences, but also address the different needs, priorities and aspirations of those involved.

Gender in agriculture and extension

Though farming is often thought of as a male occupation, women play a central role in agriculture worldwide, both constituting a large proportion of the agricultural labour force (43% of farmers in developing countries), and depending heavily on agriculture for their livelihoods (>60% of economically active women in sub-Saharan Africa and nearly 70% in South Asia work in agriculture). It is difficult to make broad generalisations about gender in agriculture due to the variation in gender roles, farming systems, and other factors across geographic and cultural contexts but some generalisations hold true including that men have great access than women to control over productive resources such as land, labour, livestock, credit, and technologies, as well as to services such as extension and education; and studies of agricultural productivity consistently find that women tend to have an average of 20-30 per cent lower productivity than men.

There are strong gender disparities in access to extension services and adoption of new technologies, with male farmers consistently reporting better access to extension information and higher rates of adoption of fertilisers, improved varieties, and other technologies promoted by extension providers. Traditional approaches to extension, such as visits from extension officers and training workshops, tend to reach men more easily than women, though some alternative approaches, such as radio and mobile phone have fared better in reaching women as well. Farmers' willingness and ability to implement the recommendations of extension workers depends heavily on the resources – land, labour, capital, etc – that they have at their disposal. Female farmers therefore often find it more difficult to adopt new technologies or practices even when they are able to access extension, as they tend to control fewer resources than their male counterparts.

Mainstreaming gender into project planning and implementation

The programme level logical framework will be reviewed from a gender perspective during the annual programme review, and areas identified for improvement will be updated at that time. Outputs (= expected results) will be analysed from a gender perspective and gender-sensitive indicators of achievement will be developed. Possible adapted indicators are given below and additional recommendations and guiding questions to provoke thought and analysis in each stage of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programme activities are given in the gender strategy document.

Outputs/Expected Result 2: National networks of plant clinics established to provide regular advice to farmers and facilitate the collection and use of plant health information

Current indicator	Gender sensitive indicator
Plant clinic locations selected	Appropriate plant clinic locations for women and men selected
Modules 1-4 updated and validated	Modules 1-4 updated and validated including gender training
Plant clinics offer appropriate advice (assumption)	Plant clinics offer advice that is appropriate for problem presented and needs, resources and situation of farmer
Advocacy and communication strategy implemented	Advocacy and communication strategy, including gender requirements for plant clinics, implemented

Outputs/Expected Result 4: Key plant health problems identified and addressed through linkages with new and existing extension approaches

Current indicator	Gender sensitive indicator
Key plant health problems identified	Key plant health problems identified, disaggregated by gender and other relevant socio-cultural factors
Existing extension priorities and initiatives assessed	Existing extension priorities and initiatives assessed, including assessment of the degree to which they are gender sensitive in identifying and addressing the needs of farmers and the gender balance they achieve in reaching farmers
Complementary extension campaigns targeting key productivity constraints planned and executed	Complementary extension campaigns targeting men's and women's key productivity constraints planned and executed; data collected on campaign effectiveness are gender disaggregated

Outputs/Expected Result 5: National plant health information system through the knowledge bank in place to support advisory services

Current indicator	Gender sensitive indicator
Relevant personnel trained in production of extension materials	Relevant personnel (including both men and women) trained in production of extension materials
Mobile-based advisory services pilot tested	Mobile-based advisory services pilot tested, including testing of perceptions of usability and usefulness among different groups (men, women, youth, elderly, etc)
Plant clinic data regularly analysed	Plant clinic data regularly analysed, including analysis of gender balance of clinic clients

While the ultimate goal of gender empowerment is beyond the scope of Plantwise; the strategy will focus on promoting gender equality as much as possible through focused, practical measures to ensure that gender considerations are integrated throughout the programme cycle and that interventions are gender responsive. To this end, gender analysis must be integrated throughout the programme. Gender is heavily context-dependent, with gender roles and relations varying widely between and within countries. Plantwise, as a global programme, needs to understand gender relations in each of the contexts in which it operates, and there is unlikely to be a universally correct way of, for example, running plant clinics in a gender sensitive manner.

Mainstreaming gender into monitoring and evaluation

In order for the monitoring and evaluation to provide a true picture of the effectiveness of the programme it is necessary for this work to be carried out in a gender sensitive manner. The cultural context in which we are working will have a strong influence on how we should carry out our evaluation and will affect the impact of Plantwise in ways over which the programme can have no influence. For instance male and female headed households may make different farming related decisions, or female headed households where the husband is working away from home may again make different decisions. The different levels of access to and control of land and labour between men and women, as well as within these groups (younger farmers, whether male or female are likely to have less access to land for example) will also influence farming decisions and therefore possibly the impact of Plantwise, but again these are beyond the control of the programme. The evaluation that we carry out to assess the influence of Plantwise can however collect data on cultural factors where possible to allow some contextual analysis that may provide lessons about how we can make Plantwise more relevant (if possible) to different gender and socio-economic groups.

Gender disaggregated data is essential to any gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation. It is needed not just at impact level, but also output level and monitoring and evaluation activities should be planned with this in mind. The analysis should not only consider disaggregated data, but also examine these data in the light of differing gender roles and divisions; access to resources, information etc.; power relations within a household; literacy and education levels etc. This analysis should be particularly useful in the integration of plant clinics into a plant health system and ensuring its sustainability in the long term.

Implementation of the Plantwise Gender Strategy

Not all gender issues can be addressed immediately and it will not be possible to consider all issues in all countries. Certain topics may even be addressed on a programme level, such as the development of specific training components within Plantwise that target gender. Therefore, there is a need to prioritise gender issues and proceed in a stepwise fashion according to the most suitable target countries and timing.

- 1) All countries:
 - a. consultation with different stakeholder groups to identify most suitable time and location of plant clinic and plant health system interventions
 - b. systematic collection of gender disaggregated data from plant clinics, plant health rallies and CECs
 - c. encourage clinic organisations to engage more women plant doctors
 - d. disaggregate clinic data according to gender vs. crops/plant health problems and origin of the clients
 - e. use the findings as inputs for in-country coordination/follow up meetings to discuss implication for clinic operations
- 2) Some countries:
 - a. use existing information about the socio-economic/cultural dimensions of gender inequality to discuss and design plant clinic and plant health system interventions.
 - b. systematic collection of feedback from different types of clinic clients (men, women, young, old, ethnic groups) via questionnaires, focus groups etc.
 - c. targeted advocacy and gender training at different stakeholder levels
- 3) Few selected countries:
 - a. in-depth research on selected gender aspects, which can be used to ask new questions and conduct follow-up studies using quantitative and qualitative methods



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