



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



**STRENGTHENING GENDER-RESPONSIVE
CLIMATE POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

IN THE LIVESTOCK SECTOR



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Development policies should recognize and invest in women and men's differential roles in the household and across the livestock sector to reduce intergender conflicts and increase women's leadership and decision-making powers.
- 2 Identify existing local practices that can be scaled up. This can be done by leveraging women's productive roles and salvaging and revaluing their traditional livestock practices and use of local resources.
- 3 Deconstructing women's vulnerabilities through intentionality. Develop deliberate policies and actions that ensure women's meaningful participation and equal opportunities for women and men in the livestock sector.
- 4 Recognize the multiplicity of women. More often than not, the experiences of women are homogenized without regard to their social status, ethnicity, age, educational level and agroecological context. Failure to be cognizant of intersectionalities could perpetuate the vulnerability of women.
- 5 Having a deeper understanding of cultural norms and social contexts is crucial to better tailor policies and actions aimed at women's empowerment.

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INTRODUCTION

Livestock products are crucial for global food security as they provide about **17 percent** of global kilocalorie consumption and **33 percent** of global protein consumption (Rojas-Downing et al. 2017).



About 600 million of the world's poorest households keep livestock as an essential source of income and food production to manage risk, store wealth and build up assets (FAO, 2018). However, women face several constraints to ownership and decision-making power in the sector.

While the demand for livestock products continues to climb alongside economic growth in developing countries, the livestock sector is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. On the other hand, livestock production is vulnerable to climate change, which is already increasing competition over natural resources, decreasing water availability, feed quality and quantity, and provoking heat stress, drought and animal diseases. In livestock systems, women are often portrayed as a homogeneous group facing similar challenges such as lack of access to productive resources, skills, and little voice in decision-making within a household or community (Farhall & Rickards, 2021). The problem with this portrayal is that it becomes heavily focused on technical solutions and not on people, their needs and how they wish to be assisted (Wood, 2001; Farhall & Rickards, 2021).

Pork is the most widely consumed meat in the world (36 percent) followed by poultry (33 percent), which constitute the largest source of protein among poorer communities (OECD and FAO, 2021). In most developing countries, small livestock and dairy are primarily managed by women, which should inform more tailored gender-responsive policies.

Scaling up culturally acceptable and locally available solutions requires government intervention through intentional policies that can empower women. Further, more funds should be allocated to replicate successful gender-responsive and transformative projects and identify entry points to mainstream gender considerations into livestock policies.

This brief showcases promising research and innovations from India and Botswana to inform policymakers and guide gender-responsive, climate-smart investments and policies in countries' livestock sectors.

1 LOCAL RESEARCH AND ACTIONS

● ● ● LOCAL ACTIONS: INDIA

Increasing income generation and the resilience of women through local solutions – backyard poultry

BACKGROUND

Food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty are some of the greatest challenges in rural India, with a large share of the population experiencing protein deficiency. Women bear the brunt, which can be explained by major gender disparities, in addition to climate change impacts. To address these challenges, the government of India through the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries established a backyard poultry development scheme. The programme supplied chicks of indigenous breeds to the most vulnerable farmers. This breed had proven to be more resilient to different climatic shocks.

Project beneficiaries received about 45 chicks each at subsidized prices in two or three cycles, based on progress. After distributing the chicks, the government, through extension agents, provided training on how to take care of them until they mature. In addition, farmers were taught entrepreneurial skills that allowed them to start a business, hence ensuring the sustainability of this activity.

FINDINGS

Representing both a source of eggs and meat, the chicks enhanced the resilience of households by improving household food security and nutrition through their high-quality protein content.

The project also effectively increased income generation. Ranjita Sethy, a young woman from east India who benefited from the project, was able to escape poverty and improve the food security and nutrition of her household. The success of Ranjita encouraged other women in the community to start their backyard poultry activity. Ranjita and other women made a profit of INR 3000 (approximately USD 38) each every three months, while having enough surplus to feed their families. The project reached several women in remote areas of India, enabling an increase in income while empowering them and improving their status in the society. Implementing a project of this nature can bring socioeconomic benefits to marginal communities and vulnerable groups, particularly landless labourers, Indigenous Peoples, and women in rural areas (Mahapatra, 2019).



● ● ● POLICY CASE STUDY: BOTSWANA

The power of policy intentionality to bridge the gender gap in Botswana's livestock sector

BACKGROUND

Botswana is a semi-arid, sparsely populated country in the interior of southern Africa. Because of the dry climate and low population density, livestock production dominates agricultural activities and plays a central cultural and economic role. A recent study conducted by the University of Botswana reveals significant differences between men and women for cattle holdings and population, with the ratio being 3 to 1 respectively. The main dominating enterprise for livestock is beef production while dairy lags behind.

Nonny Wright, a young woman who grew up in a farming family, took an opportunity and established her farm in 2013, in Ngamiland, in the northwest of Botswana. Nonny was convinced that agriculture, like any other industry could generate a livelihood for her family, but only she could approach it from a commercial standpoint. As of 2019, Nonny's farm had about 80 heads of cattle, 55 of which died due to extreme drought, that swept across southern Africa between 2017 and 2020 as a result of climate change. Nevertheless, she was able to sustain production despite odds with the remaining 25 heads of cattle.

FINDINGS

Nonny recognized the importance of product processing and value addition, and established a small medium enterprise, *Lopey Inc and Sereledi Dairy Brands*. The enterprise specializes in producing yogurt, fresh milk, and sour milk (madila in Setswana language).

Though Nonny engages in a male dominated sector, her farm is benefiting from different policy frameworks and processes established by the government of Botswana to empower women and promote their equal participation not only in agriculture but across other sectors as well. For example, through the land distribution act, more women in Botswana own arable land than men now. The act stipulates that if the government has an agricultural land for distribution, 30 percent of such land is earmarked for women farmers, which still does not exclude them from the remaining 70 percent. When Nonny needed to produce feed for livestock as a response to drought, this policy allowed her to expand the operations of her farm. In addition to land allocation and distribution, Nonny's enterprise is benefiting from the public procurement scheme through which she can sell her produce to different government institutions, as well as a competitive pricing scheme aimed at shielding women against well-established male enterprises that take advantage of economies of scale in their pricing during the tendering process.



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The government of Botswana, which saw men owning 73 percent of cattle, enacted an agricultural development programme (Integrated Support for Arable Agricultural Development) that promotes and supports the participation of women in arable farming, small stock, poultry and horticultural projects. In the cultural context of Botswana, small stock like piggery and poultry are within the sphere of influence of women and are not likely to be points of contestation in their management within the household.

The government of Botswana demonstrated the power of deliberate efforts in policy-making through public procurement schemes, land allocation, and cultural cognizance, in changing the gender and power dynamics in agriculture towards closing gender gaps.

In an effort to empower youths and upcoming female farmers, Nonny is engaged in social corporate responsibility where she holds agricultural fairs to promote young farmers in addition to capacity building, especially on the business management aspect of agriculture.

● ● ● ABOUT THE FMM149 PROGRAMME

The objective of the FMM 149 programme, also known as the **Scaling up implementation of the Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and its Gender Action Plan (Enhanced GAP) in Agriculture and the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**, is to promote more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, while contributing to poverty reduction, food security and nutrition, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

The Gender Action Plan (GAP) of the Lima work programme recognizes the need for women to be represented in all aspects of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process. Countries under this sub-programme develop gender-responsive climate policies and actions in agriculture and support gender balance and women's leadership at national, regional, and global levels, specifically in the UNFCCC. Support will be given to countries to meet their gender targets established in the UNFCCC Lima work programme.

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