

Understanding gender in wheat-based livelihoods for enhanced WHEAT R4D impact in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Ethiopia

International Center for the Improvement of Maize and Wheat (CIMMYT)

The challenge

Wheat is very important for food security in low-income countries and will remain so. However, supply does not meet demand in these countries and when food supply is deficient, women and children are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition. Various indices point at the serious hunger and gender problems in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Ethiopia (FAOSTAT 2014, Social Watch 2016):

Afghanistan: Female economically active population in agriculture: 34 %, Gender Equity Index 2012: 154/154¹

Pakistan: Global Hunger Index 2013: 19.3 (alarming),
Female economically active population in agriculture: 32 %,
Gender Equity Index 2012: 149/154

Ethiopia: Global Hunger Index 2013: 25.7 (serious),
Female economically active population in agriculture: 45 %,
Gender Equity Index 2012: 133/154

Wheat Research and Development (R&D) may increase production and supply of wheat but the different impacts on women and men is unknown. Research shows that rural women in many low-income countries are less likely than men to own land or livestock, to adopt new technologies, to get access to credits or other financial services, or to receive education or extension advice. The FAO 2011 State of Food and Agriculture report

Project name	Understanding gender in wheat-based livelihoods for enhanced WHEAT R4D impact in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Ethiopia
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estimates that if women had the same access to production resources as men, they could increase yields on their fields by 20-30 %. The FAO calculates that this alone would raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5-4 %, and that this, in turn, could reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12-17 % or 100-150 million people.

Although considerable literature now exists on gender and agriculture in general, and on farming systems, very few studies have explored gender and social equity issues specifically in relation to wheat-based systems and livelihoods. There is significant social heterogeneity within and across social groups and regions in wheat-based systems that should be better understood because

¹ Global Hunger Index 2013 of Afghanistan not available



Pictures:
Focus Groups Discussions and Key Informant Interviews in Pakistan

gender norms and agency and how they can change a context specific. The limited evidence base represents a challenge for policy and R&D interventions.

Our approach

The project is based on the assumption that women and youth have untapped potential in relation to agricultural development, and that improving especially women's access to the benefits of wheat R&D will enhance their assets base (human, social, financial, physical and natural capital). It is further assumed that this will contribute to improved food security and overall accelerated development of wheat-based systems and livelihoods.

The overall research strategy is aimed at developing an evidence base on gender and wheat-based livelihoods. It combines broad situational analysis (scoping studies) with grounded, local level case studies and lessons drawn from concrete planned interventions. The approach is participatory and iterative, aiming to ensure that the research is informed by local realities and perspectives of different stakeholders. Data collection methods will include: focus group discussions with male and female farmers of different ages and social groups; key informant interviews with male and female farmers of different social groups and stakeholders (e.g. local authorities and decision makers, applied development actors, agricultural researchers); stakeholder analysis; mobility mapping; literature reviews (peer-reviewed and grey literature); assessment and mining of existing quantitative data sets with relevance to wheat/agriculture and gender, including information from national statistics, World Bank, CIMMYT and other CGIAR centers etc.

The project contains also a capacity building element: Once the evidence base on gender in wheat is consolidated and expanded, this will be shared with wheat R&D partners in a manner that builds their interest and capacity.

The benefits

Through increased evidence and dissemination, future wheat R&D interventions will increase the empowerment of poor women and youth in wheat-based systems in a manner that helps to unleash their potential.

Policy makers will have a new evidence-base on gender relations in wheat-based systems and livelihoods for improved decision making and priority setting to ensure that agricultural R&D promotes equality of opportunity and outcomes for female and male farmers.

Expected impact

By understanding how gender norms and agency affect the ability of individuals (men, women and youth) to learn about, try out, take up and benefit from agricultural innovations, rural poverty and food insecurity will be improved, along with gender equity, in wheat-based systems and livelihoods.

Wheat R&D partners will appreciate gender integration as an opportunity to enhance impact, and diligently address gender considerations in relation to improved wheat technology development, adaptation and diffusion.

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