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1+1=1: Engaging Men and Women in Agriculture for Positive Impact

The TOPS Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Case Study Series
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Increasing Productivity and Household Decision Making with TechnoServe's Agriculture and Gender Integration

TechnoServe works in East Africa to increase household income from farming activities. The teams have learned that women's equal access to productive agricultural resources is essential to have a positive impact on household income. Generally, women have less access to productive resources—including training, inputs, land rights and financial access—than men in East Africa. This can lead to a lower crop yield from land cultivated by women and lower overall output since farm responsibilities are often split by gender¹. By providing women with the same access as men to productive opportunities, there can be up to a 30 percent increase in their farm yields².



¹ Meinzen-Dick, R., N. Johnson, A. Quisumbing, J. Njuki, J. Behrman, D. Rubin, A. Peterman, and E. Waitanji. Gender, Assets, and Agricultural Development Programs: A Conceptual Framework. CAPRI Working Paper No. 99. International Food Policy Research Institute: Washington, DC. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2499/CAPRIWP99>.

² 2011. Food and Agricultural Organizations. *The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11: Women in Agriculture Closing the Gender Gap for Development*. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e.pdf>

TechnoServe recognizes that focusing only on men or women in the household does not provide the greatest impact, because it neglects half of the agricultural labor force and because information is often not shared between men and women in the household. Instead, they found that **engaging both men and women from the same household can have a bigger impact** on increasing women’s equal access to productive resources, resulting in increased agricultural productivity. In addition, they found substantial gender and household dynamic benefits to engaging both women and men, including increased knowledge sharing, reduced intra-household conflict and domestic violence, and increased joint financial decision making, which increased women’s control of agricultural income and assets.

TechnoServe implements **gender best practices in their agriculture productive resource programming**. These best practices help their programs create safe spaces for women and men to learn and share knowledge.

The best practices include:

- As a program, monitor and set targets for equal access to agricultural productive resources for women and men. This should expand beyond participation rates and inputs to include all agriculture productive resources.
- Encourage women’s participation in productive resource activities by extending invitations to activities through local leaders, through their husbands, and by directly asking them to attend. Working with local leaders, men, and women helps facilitate a more encouraging and safe space for program activities.
- Consider childcare needs, group dynamics of men and women, costs associated with attendance, literacy, time of day, and location of activities to allow for joint participation. Analyze barriers that may prevent women from attending due to other responsibilities and constraints.
- Design and deliver activities that meet both men and women’s agriculture needs. For example, conduct gender analyses on the focus crops and make sure program interventions address practices associated with both women and men.
- Highlight role models in the group. Role models share why both female and male members of their household are participants and the associated benefits they see in their household.

Through implementing these best practices, TechnoServe has seen a positive impact on agricultural production and women’s empowerment across Africa, Latin America and India. Here we share case studies from Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia.

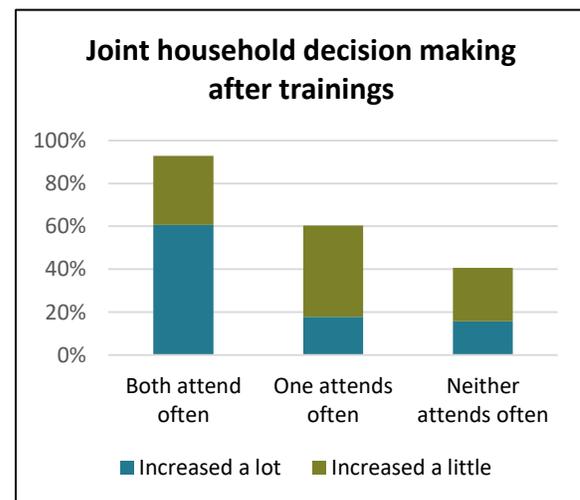


Figure 1. Change in joint decision making reported by farmer group participants after agriculture trainings.
Source: TechnoServe, Cocoa Project, Southern Tanzania, 2015

Cocoa in Tanzania

TechnoServe applied their gender best practices to cocoa farmers groups in Tanzania. TechnoServe conducted a gender analysis with data from 302 cocoa farmers, 65 percent of which were female. Households with both the husband and wife as participating members of the cocoa farmer group reported that joint membership resulted in increased cooperation within their household, better household decision making, greater information flow, and increased transparency. At the same time, if the husband and wife attended agricultural extension training together, 93 percent of participants reported that joint household decision making had improved, indicating an increase in women’s participation in decision making. When only the man or woman attended from the household, 18 percent indicated joint household decision making had improved “a lot” and 42 percent indicated it had improved “a little” (see Figure 1).

Coffee in Ethiopia

TechnoServe found, through focus groups with 160 target farmers growing coffee and maize, that information on coffee farming best practices was not being shared between women and men in Ethiopian households, despite women conducting between 40 and 50 percent of the coffee farming practices. Prior to TechnoServe integrating their gender best practices in Ethiopia, only three percent of their training participants were women. In addition, the majority of women indicated that their husbands shared little or no information on the learned best practices and that social norms make it difficult for them to share lessons or knowledge with men from outside their households³.

These social dynamics meant best practices were not reaching female farmers, which was one of the reasons that TechnoServe decided to invite both men and women from the same household to technical trainings and to set targets on women’s participation. The trainings, when conducted using the gender best practices, provided a safe space for women and men to learn and share knowledge on coffee farming without breaking local social norms.

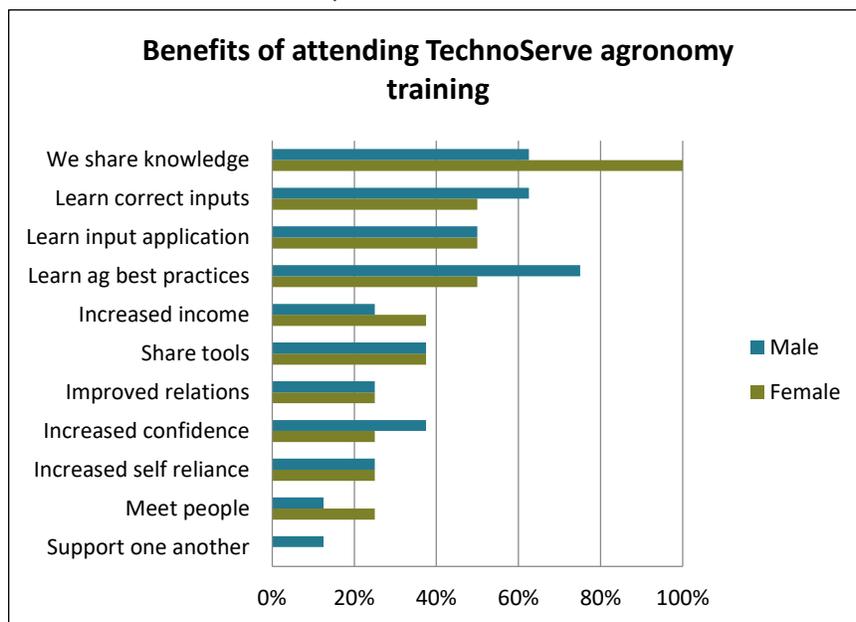


Figure 2. Reported benefits of TechnoServe’s agronomy training by participants. Source: TechnoServe Ethiopia Coffee Focus Groups

³ Learn more information at: <http://www.girleffect.org/explore/breaking-the-cycle-of-violence-against-girls/in-numbers-why-tackling-violence-will-unleash-the-potential-of-millions-of-girls-and>
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/Worldswomen/WW_full%20report_color.pdf

By targeting both men and women from the same household with the same coffee technical trainings, TechnoServe saw large improvements in technical knowledge shared between men and women. In post-training surveys, all female participants indicated that sharing knowledge among participants and partners was a greater benefit of the training than the technical material offered (see Figure 2). In addition, participants indicated that joint decision making on the use of income derived through coffee production increased as husbands and wives increased their communication on coffee farming.

Cotton in Uganda

TechnoServe saw benefits when implementing their gender practices in non-training agricultural activities as well. In their Conservation Cotton Initiative⁴ program in Uganda, TechnoServe encouraged both members of the household to join joint or parallel business producer groups and village savings and loans associations (VSLAs). These groups were created to overcome cotton market systems constraints identified in post-conflict areas of Northern Uganda. The program found that there were gender dynamic benefits when men and women received the same information, training and opportunities, even if they were not in the same farmers group or VSLA. The important aspect was that both household members received the same information and knew their partner was receiving it as well. This increased household communication because the couples had the same information set and could discuss issues together at home. It also improved transparency in the household by providing equal access to information on the household's productive resources, which led to self-reported improvements in joint household decision making and a reduction in domestic violence.

Conclusion

Both women and men play a significant role in household agricultural productivity. Through multiple programs, TechnoServe learned that providing equal access for women and men from the same household to agriculture productive resources is an effective way to improve agricultural productivity. Engaging both husbands and wives also has significant impacts on gender and household dynamics including joint decision making, information sharing, and domestic violence reduction.

To learn more about TechnoServe's agriculture and gender programs in East Africa, please contact Amanda Satterly.

The TOPS Program

The Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program is the USAID/Food for Peace-funded learning and knowledge management initiative, bringing the highest quality information, knowledge, and promising practices in food assistance programming to implementers and donors around the world to ensure more communities and households benefit from the U.S. Government's investments to fight global hunger.

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⁴ <http://www.technoserve.org/our-work/projects/conservation-cotton-initiative>