



The recent CTA workshop on 'making next-generation ACP agriculture work for women' identified the following critical success factors to enable women to truly benefit from agriculture: access by women to investment and finance, access to markets, skills support, networking and capacity development, access to information, knowledge and technology, access to land, overcoming socio-cultural factors, and appropriate recognition of women (in society, in policies, through targeted delivery of services).

This brief by Oluwaseun Adedeji, Michael Sudarkasa, Dorianne Rowan-Campbell and Aurélie Reynier outlines why we need an index to measure and monitor women's access to the services, markets, policies and other aspects constraining their ability to contribute to and benefit from opportunities in agriculture and agribusiness, especially in the developing world. This would allow policy-makers, women's development advocates and development partners to better focus their efforts so they make agriculture work for women.



Introduction

The contribution of women to agricultural and food production is universally recognised as significant to global food security, but particularly valuable in Africa and developing parts of the world. However, it is quite difficult to verify empirically the share of economic resources accessible to women. Poor access to productive resources such as land, credit, infrastructure and markets is an age-long barrier in agriculture. However, more recently and importantly, women interested in activity beyond production in the agricultural value chain, and those keen to pursue agribusiness, are seeking increased access to resources such as technology, capacity development and policy processes.

Why an index?

During a 2018 'writeshop' convened by the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), stakeholders identified a number of key areas that impede the progress of women in agriculture. These include 1) access to land, 2) access to finance, 3) access to

markets, 4) access to infrastructure, technology and equipment, 5) access to education and capacity-development resources, 6) access to business information and networks, and 7) access to policy-makers/policy dialogue. Participants noted that if it were possible to measure the degree and level of access that women had in these areas, it would be possible to channel resources and support and to develop specific policies that could help improve the women's opportunities and ability to succeed in agriculture and agribusiness. It was out of this discussion that the idea of a 'Women's Agribusiness Access Index' was born. Benchmarking and measuring levels of access annually would allow policy-makers, women's development advocates and development partners to focus their efforts and programme activities towards the improvement of access in the target areas.

Two indices that focus on women's development issues already exist: The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index and the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs. However, neither focuses specifically on measuring the level of access that women have to the seven key enterprise growth and development levers identified.

This brief proposes an index specifically focused on women's access to various factors of production in agriculture that would contribute towards helping women become more productive, successful and sustainable producers and actors along the value chain in the agribusiness space. Such an index would also help to improve stakeholders' ability to measure the efficacy of development interventions meant to assist women in agriculture.

Components of an index

The index comprises seven components: 1) access to land; 2) access to finance; 3) access to markets; 4) access to infrastructure, technology and equipment; 5) access to education and capacity-development resources; 6) access to business information and networks; and 7) access to policy-makers/policy dialogue.

Access to land

One of the most serious obstacles to increasing agricultural productivity in Africa is women's lack of access to secure land tenure. The consequences of food insecurity, inability to

Key messages

- There is no single, comprehensive index that measures the share of economic resources accessible to women in developing countries.
- This brief identifies seven key elements of a proposed index: 1) access to land, 2) access to finance, 3) access to markets, 4) access to infrastructure, technology and equipment, 5) access to education and capacity-development resources, 6) access to business information and networks, and 7) access to policy-makers/policy dialogue.
- Measuring the degree and level of access that women have in these areas would allow policy-makers, women's development advocates and development partners and others to channel resources and support and to develop specific policies that could help improve women's opportunities and ability to succeed in agriculture and agribusiness.

invest in agricultural production and denial of access to financial resources. This component would consider land tenure and access under the aspects of acquisition, possession and use of land and evaluate policies and programmes in countries that help women secure the right to own and to lease land.

Access to finance

Women in agribusiness often have difficulty accessing finance. This component would evaluate the level of access to finance (debt, equity, trade finance, factoring services, input finance, insurance, commodity finance) available in a given country and the ways being pursued to increase the ability of women to secure finance.

Access to markets

Women in agriculture/agribusiness often operate outside the formal value chains in their countries and thus struggle to access market intelligence and to secure consistent markets for their products. This component would evaluate the level and degree of penetration that women have to both formal and informal markets at national, international and regional levels.

Access to infrastructure, technology and equipment

Most smallholder women farmers lack access to labour-saving tools and equipment, to energy to dry or cool and process their harvests, to irrigation and water-pumping equipment and to mechanisation and automation to increase their efficiency and yields. This area of analysis would measure the programmes, initiatives and available infrastructure, technologies and equipment that women in agriculture/agribusiness have at their disposal.

Access to education and capacity-development resources

Women in agribusiness have less access to extension services, technical knowledge and business skills training. This area of analysis would assess the availability of educational resources (primary, secondary, technical/vocational and university education), extension programmes and services, business development services and other capacity-development programmes for women in agriculture.

Access to business information and networks

Women in agriculture typically have fewer opportunities to network in business circles and to benefit from peer exchanges with others involved with business. This area of analysis would focus on how women can develop and participate more actively in information communities that can enhance their business efforts.

Access to policy-makers/policy dialogue

Women in developing countries commonly do not have a voice in the policy sphere. This area of analysis would explore the extent to which women are able to provide inputs into policy-making organs in their communities or countries and assess how often and how they are able to engage with policy-makers on issues that impact their lives and livelihoods. It would also seek to evaluate women's access to policy design and policy implementation actors and institutions.

Conclusions

Developing the index would ideally involve a workshop on each component, with participation of subject-matter specialists.

Making the index a useful development tool would require its widespread adoption. To achieve this, the index will have to be:

- **user-friendly** – the index should be understandable and digestible; guidelines should be accessible to stakeholders;
- **inclusive** – key stakeholder groups must be involved in the decision-making process;
- **open access** – the index should be a living document; documentation and tools related to it should be accessible in open formats; and
- **integrated action** – actors should be encouraged to pair assessments with concrete actions to improve or maintain quality. The implementation of the index should follow a consultative process.

The authors hope this brief will encourage organizations such as CTA, the CGIAR and others to join forces and develop such an index as a contribution to women-friendly agricultural development.

This brief was created through a CTA-led process to document and share actionable knowledge on 'what works' for ACP agriculture. It capitalises on the insights, lessons and experiences of practitioners to inform and guide the implementation of agriculture for development projects.

A series of video recordings with participants gives personal perspectives on the issues raised during the workshop. See: <https://bit.ly/2FROq7r>

The products of the workshop can be found and downloaded at: <https://bit.ly/2sRaSVH>

Authors

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About the series

CTA Technical Briefs document experience and learning in topical issues of interest to the ACP agricultural development community. They are intended as a practical guide for people involved in an issue professionally or for people with a strong interest in the topic.

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