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**Summary of the study on
The impact of Farmer Field Schools on Gender Relations in Kenya**
Version 30 March 2017

This document summarizes the following article:

Fris-Hansen et al., 2012. Less noise in the household: the impact of Farmer Field School of Research on Gender Relations. *Journal of Research, Gender and Development* (ISSN: 2251-0036) Vol. 2(2) pp. 044-055, February 2012. (<http://www.interestjournals.org/irgds/february-2012-vol-2-issue-2/less-noise-in-the-household-the-impact-of-farmer-field-schools-on-gender-relations>)

The studied FFS: This study concerned FFS in the Kakamega District in western Kenya, an area with high poverty levels (50% living in absolute poverty), small-holder farming being the main economic activity and a large and well-functioning FFS programme. Apart from the technical farming-related issues, also some non-agricultural issues were integrated in the FFS curriculum, such as HIV/Aids and domestic violence. The article states that "As all participants in FFS are expected to be actively engaged in all field of activities and rotate roles such as discussion leaders, presenters, hosts, etc., traditional gender roles are downplayed, leaving space for individual expressions."

Methodology: The study involved interviews with 22 current or graduate FFS participants and 8 group interviews, using purposely sampling. Also key informants were interviewed, such as FFS facilitators.

FINDINGS:

1. Gender relations in FFS groups

The FFS groups in the study areas were made up of about 60% women and 40% men. While membership was dominated by women, elected leadership positions tended to be held by men, apart from the post of treasurer, which often was held by a woman. A dynamic and positive atmosphere in the groups was observed, where men and women seemed at ease and interact with each other in a more relaxed and freer manner than is normally the case among adults of the opposite sex. The structure of the FFS, that dictates that all participants should be equally involved in all activities, make it possible for individuals to explore roles outside culturally accepted norms.

2. Changing roles and habits in the households

Participants stated that gendered roles and habits, based on who should be doing what kinds of duties within the community or household, are gradually starting to change, and the FFS seemed to have contributed to this. Many respondents reported an increase in women being breadwinners in the household and contributing economically to the upkeep of the family. The increased responsibility for the household economy taken up by many women seemed not to be taken as a threat by men but rather as a relief.

3. Change in gendered customs and traditions

Traditional beliefs and taboos related to farming practices in Kakamega included beliefs that men should not grow vegetables, women cannot plant trees or bananas, sweet potato should be planted by women only and women should not eat eggs or chicken meat, with the breaking of such taboos being connected to a high level of fear. But by being able to experiment with "forbidden" practices within the safe space that the FFS provides, participants' beliefs are changing because of a lack of such consequences.

4. Increased work ethic among men

FFS graduates expressed a stronger work ethic, as well as a commitment to farming and their work. This was especially the case among men, who would typically tend to spend less time in the bar with other men and more time at home on the farm.

5. Changed view of women among men

The interviews had it made apparent that there is a general belief among men that women are not capable of thinking and reasoning in the same way as men. This belief had started to change through the relationships

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Summary of the study on The impact of Farmer Field Schools on Gender Relations in Kenya
research 30mar_17 summary impact of FFSs on gender relations in Kenya.pdf


Farmer Field School - A group-based learning process through which farmers carry out experiential learning activities that help them to understand the ecology of their fields, based on simple experiments, regular field observations and group analysis. The knowledge gained from these activities enables participants to make their own locally specific decisions about crop management practices. This approach represents a radical departure from earlier agricultural extension programmes, in which farmers were expected to adopt generalized recommendations that are formulated by specialists from outside the community.

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Gender relations are the specific sub-set of social relations uniting men and women as social groups in a particular community, including how power and access to and control over resources are distributed between the sexes. Gender relations intersect with all other influences on social relations - age, ethnicity, race, religion - to determine the position and identity of people in a social group. Since gender relations are a social construct, they can be transformed over time to become more equitable.

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current 16:56, 10 December 2020		1,240 × 1,754, 2 pages (439 KB)	Saad.chowdhury (talk contribs)	

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This page was last edited on 10 December 2020, at 16:57.

Blue Gold Program Wiki

The wiki version of the Lessons Learnt Report of the Blue Gold program, documents the experiences of a technical assistance (TA) team working in a development project implemented by the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) and the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) over an eight+ year period from March 2013 to December 2021. The wiki lessons learnt report (LLR) is intended to complement the BWDB and DAE project completion reports (PCRs), with the aim of recording lessons learnt for use in the design and implementation of future interventions in the coastal zone.

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