

Gender Analysis for Sustainable Livelihoods and Participatory Governance in Rwanda



Institute of Policy Analysis and Research - Rwanda

Introduction

This poster reports the analysis done by IPAR Rwanda on the gender differences in Rwanda and explores why these differences exist and what they mean for sustainable livelihoods and participatory governance. This is drawn from a study OXFAM commissioned to inform the Oxfam Rwanda Country Programme.

This poster includes an analysis of the legal and policy framework for gender equality and the empowerment of women, an analysis of secondary data and insights from qualitative research with key informants and women and men in Rwanda.

It draws on data from a number of sources including the main surveys carried out under the auspices of the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, survey and qualitative research carried out by IPAR-Rwanda over the last four years and other relevant research and qualitative research carried out specifically for this project

The analysis used the USAID six domains of gender as its framework and examined each domain in turn. It concludes by highlighting the key barriers and constraints for women claiming and exercising their rights, recommendations and implications for Oxfam.

The analysis will enable Oxfam to address the needs of women as well as men, to avoid perpetuating or overlooking traditional gendered power imbalances and enhance the likelihood of strong and sustainable programme results.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are key goals in their own right and are central to all other development goals. Smart development means promoting gender equality and empowering women.

Gender outcomes are about transforming the relationship between men and women so that women as well as men are able to claim and exercise their human rights See Appendix 1 for details of the framework

Research Findings

Our findings show that the legal and policy frameworks are largely in place with progressive and wide-ranging bases for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. However, there remains room for improvement – for instance there is no law promoting gender equality, the lack of legal protection of the property rights of women in consensual unions means that they can be left destitute, there is little protection for women (and men) working in the informal sector or as dependent family workers and there is little pre-school care provision. Overall though, it is mainly the implementation of these laws and policies that remains a challenge, as women in Rwanda continue to suffer economically, socially and politically from gender inequalities.

The findings also indicate that two other major barriers to women being able to claim and exercise their rights are their poor level of education and their responsibilities for domestic work and the cultivation of food for household consumption.

We summarise our main findings in more detail under the USAID six domains of gender below; the framework we use in the main report.

Assets and Access	Knowledge, Beliefs and Perceptions	Practices and Participation
Access to primary and secondary school is largely equal with primary education being universal, but the secondary school transition is low and girls are underrepresented in science, technology and engineering in technical and vocational education and at higher education level	Even with widespread awareness of gender equality laws and policies including the inheritance and land laws, understanding of their provisions is poor amongst both men and women, particularly in rural areas and amongst the poor more generally.	The labour market is vertically and horizontally segregated with women concentrated in the more poorly remunerated jobs in the farm and non-farm sectors
A majority of women have access to health care though membership of the community based health insurance, Mutuelle de santé	Traditional beliefs and practices continue to regulate and mediate women's and girl's participation in the family, the community and state as well as their access to livelihood opportunities and participation in governance	Women are responsible for the bulk of reproductive work as well as for most of the cultivating subsistence farming. Men and women participate in community activities, but women have little time for leisure activities and relaxation due to their responsibilities for children, sick or older family members, cultivation and - often - supplementary work on top of these activities
There is a lack of childcare and pre-school provision although the majority of married women with young children are in productive employment.	Some men (and women) perceive gender equality as a challenge to the 'correct' order of social relations in Rwanda, with some research participants suggesting that gender equality is seen as a challenge to masculinity	
Time and Space	Legal Rights and Status	Power and Decision Making
The 'double burden' of work and childcare and the resultant time poverty is one of the greatest observable differences between men and women in Rwanda	Rwanda has a high degree of legal gender equality but women face. The costs of legal representation are high – and still increasing - and few women can afford to seek legal advice and take grievances to the courts problems in accessing justice.	The 2003 Constitution legislates for 30 per cent of all senior public sector posts to be filled by women. At national level this quota is often exceeded however At community level a majority of leaders are male, with women generally only standing for the posts reserved for women
The labour of reproductive work also spatially restricts women	Mediation is not the same as a legal decision and women can be persuaded to accept less property than is their legal right in order to resolve the dispute and not put family relationships under too much strain.	Men are generally responsible for household decision-making and are in control of household finances.

Conclusions

The two recommendations sit above programmatic and advocacy work. Changing attitudes and behaviours and contributing to strengthening a women's movement are cross-cutting issues that are relevant to both Oxfam's programmes.

Oxfam should dedicate resources to addressing gender equality in the round rather than merely as a subset of sustainable livelihoods and participatory governance programmes.

OXFAM should consider advocacy interventions (include Addressing gaps in legal framework, solutions to women's time poverty (childcare provision), strengthen accountability among local leaders and support for strengthening of the women's movement)

OXFAM should develop programmes (bring men on board as allies for women's rights, provide training to improve women's confidence and skills and provide training for local leaders on relevant policies.

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