GENDER-RESPONSIVE APPROACHES FOR ENHANCING THE ADOPTION OF IMPROVED MAIZE SEED IN AFRICA

A MANUAL FOR SEED COMPANIES

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

CIMMYT International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center

BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation

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The Stress Tolerant Maize for Africa (STMA) Project was launched in 2016 with the aim of helping farmers in sub-Saharan Africa to mitigate the combined effects of multiple stresses such as drought, heat, poor soil fertility and diseases that affect maize production and farming, and to improve food security and livelihoods. STMA builds on strong partnerships formed under the Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa (DTMA) and Improved Maize for African Soils (IMAS) projects that achieved major successes in African maize seed systems. For more information, visit https://stma.cimmyt.org/.

International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) is the global leader in publicly-funded maize and wheat research and related farming systems. Headquartered near Mexico City, CIMMYT works with hundreds of partners throughout the developing world to sustainably increase the productivity of maize and wheat cropping systems, thus improving global food security and reducing poverty. CIMMYT is a member of the CGIAR system and leads the CGIAR research programs on maize and wheat and excellence in breeding platforms. The Center receives support from national governments, foundations, development banks and other public and private agencies. For more information, visit www.cimmyt.org.

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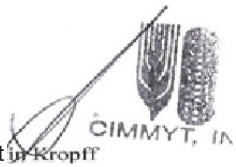
Foreword

Seed is one of the most important entry points for improving agricultural productivity, nutrition and resilience to climate change. Seed companies therefore play a vital role in the process of transforming African agriculture, by producing and distributing high quality seeds of high yielding, nutrient rich, stress-tolerant crop varieties. Women make important contributions to agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa, but have less access and control compared to men over critical agricultural resources, including improved seed. CIMMYT seeks to develop maize technologies that are responsive to the needs and preferences of both men and women and is committed to improving women's access to improved maize seed from the formal seed sector. Through research undertaken by the Stress Tolerant Maize in Africa (STMA) and other projects, CIMMYT is working to close the gender gap in agricultural productivity. Through its work with maize breeders, seed companies and agro-dealers in Africa, CIMMYT raises awareness of the specific constraints that women farmers face and provides these actors with the knowledge and skills to address these constraints.

This publication provides a resource to help seed companies to be gender-responsive at all stages of the seed supply value chain as they seek to meet the needs of a diversity of farmers. It provides practical suggestions on how to develop a seed business that considers the needs of both women and men, and presents gender-responsive approaches to promoting and increasing awareness of improved maize seed. The manual also highlights the importance for seed companies of being gender-sensitive, not only in their operations but also in the area of human resource. The main message of the manual is that it makes economic sense for seed companies to recognize men and women farmers as customers that may have different needs. CIMMYT is proud to make a contribution to developing a new breed of gender-responsive seed companies in Africa.



Martin Kropff
Director General

1. Introduction

Seed companies play an important role in agricultural development in Africa by producing and distributing quality seed of multiple crops. Seed is an entry point for improving agricultural productivity, nutrition and resilience to climate change through the introduction of higher-yielding, nutrient-rich, stress-tolerant crop varieties. To operate an effective business, seed companies need to have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of their clients — agricultural producers. In the African context, farmers are very diverse in terms of scale of production, the types of crops they grow, whether they are fully or partially commercially oriented, among other factors, and therefore they have different seed needs and requirements. Differences between male and female farmers is one important factor that seed companies often overlook.

This manual is intended to help seed companies in Africa have a better understanding of the importance of gender for their business. It provides practical suggestions on how gender can be integrated into various aspects of seed business operations to improve their functions. Although the manual focuses on maize, the concepts, guidelines and suggestions apply to other crops. The first section explains what gender means and why it is important for agriculture and seed businesses in Africa. The second section discusses how gender can be integrated in the multiplication, promotion and distribution of improved maize seed. The third section looks beyond operations to explore why and how seed companies can be gender-sensitive in the area of human resources.

2. Why gender matters in African agriculture and for seed companies

2.1 What is gender?

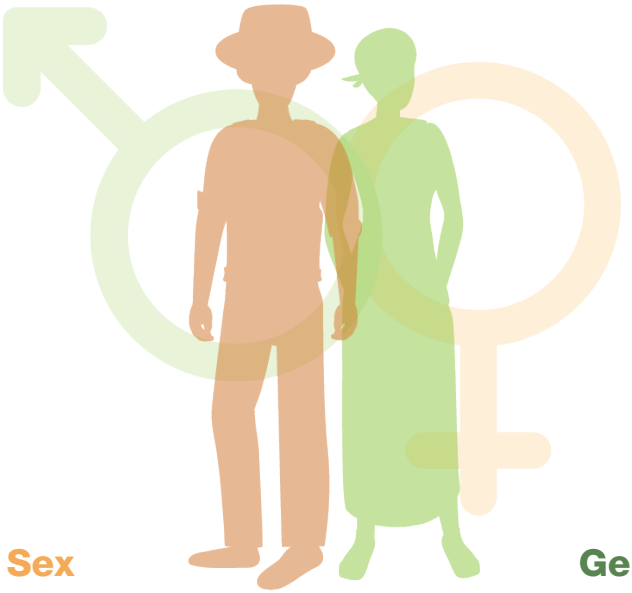
The term gender is widely used but is often misunderstood. The concept of gender distinguishes between how men and women are defined by biology (sex) and by society and culture (gender). Sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women, while gender refers to learnt social roles and identities associated with what it means to be a man or a woman in a particular society and context. Sex and gender are not the same, although some sex characteristics may influence gender roles.

Gender roles are shaped by culture, religion, economic, political and social factors. They determine how responsibilities and resources such as land and livestock are distributed between men and women. Worldwide, women as a group face discrimination and inequalities in terms of not having the same access as men to resources such as land, and not being allowed to do things such as travel on their own, grow certain crops, do certain jobs, attend school etc. The concept of gender sees inequality between men and women as a problem rooted in power at both the personal level and at the level of society as a whole. It is important to understand that gender is not about women but about the relationship between men and women. Because gender is defined by society based on traditions and practices and shaped by economic and political factors that change over time, gender roles and responsibilities can and do change.

The concept of gender also recognizes that all men and women are not the same and differ in terms of factors such as age, ethnicity, wealth, education, marital status, religion etc. For example, both wealthy women and men producers may have sufficient land, labour and cash, whereas poor women and men producers may have less of these resources. According to the culture in some societies, however, women, whether wealthy or poor, are not allowed to travel on their own or go to secondary school.

Most gender-related development interventions target women. So why do we focus on women if gender means both men and women? Worldwide, women as a group face discrimination and inequalities in terms of access to productive resources such as land, and are restricted by cultural norms that limit their mobility, their ability to grow certain crops, engage in certain occupations, attend school etc. In order to ensure that women have equal opportunities and personal freedom, development programs and efforts tend to focus first on women to make sure that there is a “level playing field”. At the same time, it is important to engage with and involve men even where activities primarily target women, to ensure their cooperation and involvement in transforming unequal gender relations.

Box 1: Sex and gender are not the same thing



Sex	Gender
Determined by biology: women give birth, have breasts and menstruate; men have testicles, facial hair and higher muscle mass.	Constructed by society; in many societies, it is mainly women who are responsible for cooking and looking after the home
Universal for all human beings	Differs between and within cultures: in many societies, both men and women can only have one spouse; in other societies, men are allowed to marry more than one woman, while in a few societies, women can have more than one husband
Unchanging, although surgery and other treatments can change sex characteristics	Changes over time; in the past in many societies, only men were allowed to vote, run for political office or drive

2.2 Why gender matters in African agriculture

In sub-Saharan Africa, women play an important role in agriculture but face more severe constraints than men in accessing land, labour, technologies, seed, services such as extension and credit and markets. Women make up nearly 50% of the agricultural labor force in Africa, with huge differences in this figure among countries and among crops (FAO, 2011). As Figure 1 shows, women's contribution to cereal production in Uganda, Tanzania, two regions of Nigeria, and Niger ranges between 21-55%. In some countries the proportion of females in the agricultural labor force is increasing due to increased male migration, wars and HIV/AIDS.

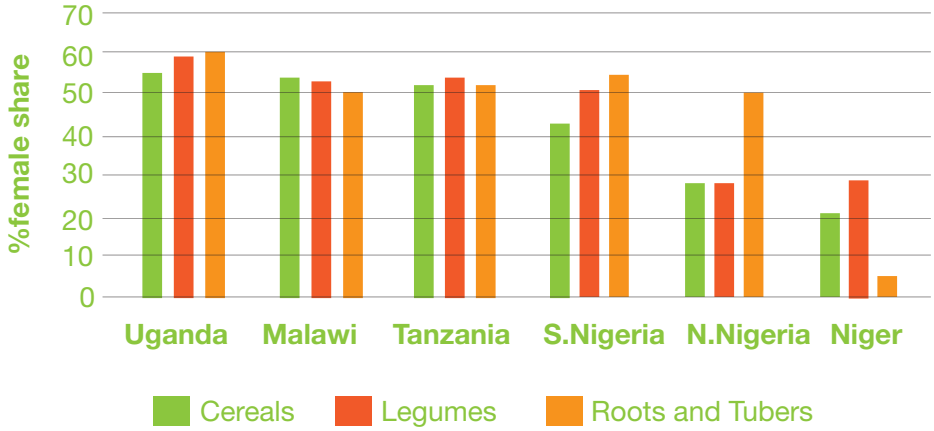


Figure 1. Female share of agricultural labor in cereals, legumes, and root and tuber crops in selected African countries, 2009-2011. Source: Palacios-Lopez et al., (2017).

But even though women play an important role in agriculture, they represent only 15% of land owners and often have access to smaller plots and land with poorer soil quality (FAO, 2011). Compared to men, women tend to have less access to labor (both household and hired) which leads to lower productivity. Generally, women have less access than men to extension and advisory services, technologies, inputs and credit.

Women are also less likely to adopt modern crop varieties compared to men. In Malawi for example, adoption of modern maize varieties was 12% lower for wives in male-headed households, and 11% lower for female household heads than for male farmers (Fisher and Kandiwa, 2014).

Development experts call these differences in men's and women's access to and use of productive resources "the gender gap". They estimate that improving women's access to these resources would enable women to increase yields on their farms by 20-30%, which would increase agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5-4% and reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12-17% (FAO, 2011).

Gender is important in African agriculture because it determines not only who has access to which resources, but also who grows which crops, who does which tasks and who makes what decisions. In many African societies, women are responsible for providing much of the food for their households and play a key role in food selection, preparation, child feeding and nutritional decision-making. They also sell crops and engage in other economic activities to get income. While men may also be responsible for providing food, in many societies they focus more on producing crops for the market.

Men's and women's roles and responsibilities are also influenced by the type of households they live in and how they organize themselves to grow crops. The majority of African women live in households headed by a man, but a significant number of women are household heads either because they are divorced or widowed or because their husbands live somewhere else most of the time. African women farmers in male-headed households are often overlooked by researchers and extension services because of the assumption that their husbands are the "real" farmers and will pass on technical information to them. But it is important to recognize that married women in male-headed households are farmers, may have preferences about crop varieties and technologies that differ from those of their husbands, and do not necessarily receive technical information from their husbands.

Maize is the most important food crop in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Eastern and Southern Africa, so it is helpful to explore in more detail what role gender plays in maize production. In most parts of Africa, maize is grown by both men and women, although the importance for each gender may be different by location. Both men and women are involved in carrying out maize production tasks, but what role each gender plays (called the gender division of labor) varies by location. For

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example, women are more likely to carry out weeding in Tanzania, while men are more involved in land preparation and planting. In Mozambique, men are more involved in land preparation and planting while women participate more in harvesting and threshing. In both countries, it is mainly men who apply pesticides, and seed storage is mainly done by women.

Farming households organize themselves in many different ways to grow maize. In some societies, households grow maize and other crops on a plot cultivated jointly by men and women. In other parts of Africa, women and men grow maize on plots which they manage and control individually, while in other communities, farmers grow maize on a combination of household- and individually-owned plots. How households organize themselves may be related to who makes decisions about what grows on each plot, among other factors.

They also sell crops and engage in other economic activities to get income. While men may also be responsible for providing food, in many societies they focus more on producing crops for the market.

Men's and women's roles and responsibilities are also influenced by the type of households they live in and how they organize themselves to grow crops. Most African women live in households headed by a man, but women are also household heads, either because they are divorced or widowed, or because their husbands live somewhere else most of the time. It is important to recognize that married women in male-headed households are also farmers, may have preferences about crop varieties and technologies that differ from those of their husbands, and do not necessarily receive technical information from their husbands. Women who live in households without a male head often face problems of access to land and male labor.

Improving women's access to land, information, improved seed and other resources would enable women to increase yields on their farms by

20-30%

This would reduce the number of hungry people in the world by

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2.3 Why gender is important for seed companies in Africa

Gender is important for seed companies, because addressing the needs of different types of farmers – women, men, young, old, large- and small-scale, has the potential to increase profits. As mentioned earlier, a significant proportion of African farmers are women. Moreover, because men and women have different roles and responsibilities in crop production, different access to resources, and often face different production challenges, they may not have the same needs and preferences for crop varieties and may face different challenges buying certified seed. It therefore makes economic sense for seed companies to target both men and women farmers, and to cater to the specific needs of women farmers. However, the needs and preferences of women farmers are often not known or considered important due to common assumptions. Research on gender in maize production provides information on some of these issues.

Common Assumptions About Women Farmers

Assumption:

Women, especially married women, are not real farmers.

Fact:

Most African women farmers are married, and depending on the context, they play an important role in farming, growing crops together with their husbands or on plots that they manage on their own. Women who are not married also play an important role in farming.

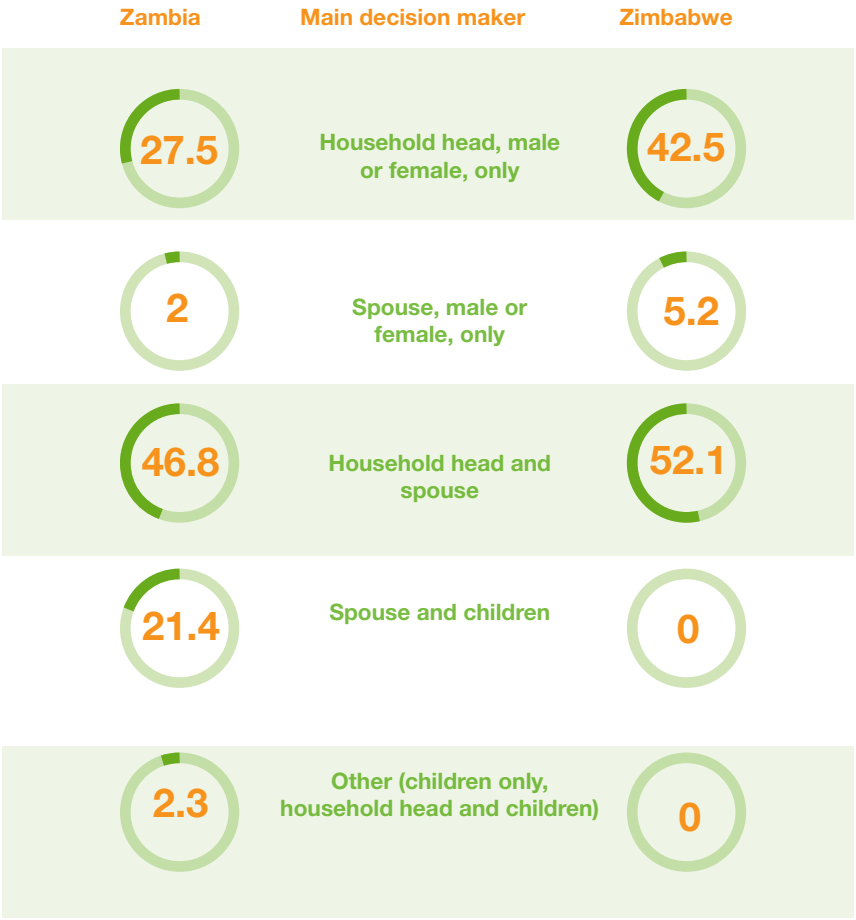
Assumption:

Women are not involved in making decisions about farm operations.

Fact:

While men make many of the decisions about farming in most parts of Africa, they often consult their wives or make decisions together with them. Women farmers also make farming decisions on their own.

Table 1: Agricultural decision-makers in Zambian and Zimbabwean households (percent)



Source: Kassie et al., 2012

Assumption:

Farmers just want a good variety, whether they are men or women.

Fact:

Fact: Studies show that both men and women maize farmers may value the same varietal traits but often rate maize characteristics differently and prefer different combinations of traits. For example, both men and women value high yield potential and early maturity. A common trend across countries is a stronger interest by women farmers in consumption-related traits such as starch content, length of conservation post-harvest, and men's tendency to focus more on productivity and marketability.

Assumption:

Women farmers are only interested in maize for household consumption.

Fact:

Both men's and women's varietal preferences change over time. In the past, hybrid maize was seen as a man's crop, while local maize was considered a women's crop. But increased involvement of women in growing maize for the market means that women are interested in varieties for both home consumption and sale.

Assumption:

It is enough to provide information to men since men share technical information with their wives.

Fact:

Husbands do not necessarily share information with their wives and as already mentioned, men and women maize producers may not grow the crop on the same plot or have the same production objectives.

In analyzing gender in maize production, researchers find it useful to focus on three categories of small-scale producers based on gender:

- Male heads of households
- Women in male-headed households
- Women in female-headed households

Committing to a gender-aware and socially-inclusive philosophy means that a seed company will seek to develop gender-responsive business strategies at all levels of its operations: seed multiplication, product processing and branding, distribution and promotion. Being gender-responsive does not mean undermining men's positions or dividing families. Rather, efforts to integrate gender into the operations of a seed business are based on the acceptance of men and women farmers as equal and potential customers or business partners, and the understanding that men and women are affected by cultural norms that affect their ability to access and plant certified seed and new crop varieties. Considering gender issues in monitoring and learning is important for learning what strategies are working and what needs improvement.

3. Gender-responsive approaches to multiplying, distributing and promoting improved maize seed

Once a new maize variety is released, seed companies work closely with their partners such as research organizations, seed multipliers and agro-dealers to multiply, promote and disseminate it widely. This section discusses how to ensure that gender is addressed in seed multiplication and promotion

3.1 Gender considerations in contract seed production

Seed companies often hire contract growers (also referred to as out-growers) to grow maize seed based on criteria such as access to land and labor. A key requirement for maize seed contract growers is access to land that is isolated from other maize fields to ensure that there is no contamination from other maize varieties, and many women farmers are unable to meet this requirement. Most seed companies do not seek to involve an equal number of men and women in contract seed production and as a result, because women tend to own or have access to smaller landholdings and have limited control over labor, maize seed contract growers are predominantly men. Yet in many cases, women provide a significant amount of labor on maize seed plots that are registered in their husbands' names. Supporting more women to be maize seed contract growers in their own right, or recognizing their "invisible" roles on male-controlled seed plots, can provide commercial benefits to seed companies in the following ways:

Improved crop quality; because women farmers often provide better-quality products than men (Chan, 2010), increasing the number of women involved in contract seed production could potentially help to improve seed quality.

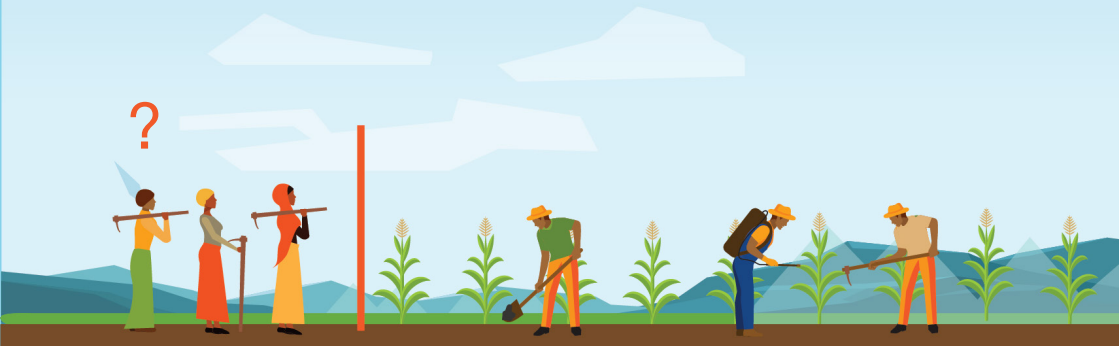
Increased productivity through improving incentives for women producers; providing training in seed production to both husbands and wives, where the latter provide labor on seed plots, can improve productivity.

A growing supply base; studies show that involving more women in contract farming can increase the number of growers, as women are effective recruiters (Chan, 2010). Growing male migration and off-farm employment in many countries means that increasing the number of women contract growers is a way to ensure future seed supply.

Box 2: Self-reflection: Is gender important in contract seed production?

To assess whether gender has been a consideration in contract seed production, ask the following questions:

- What factors do you consider when you select producers?
- Who are your current producers (in terms of gender, age, wealth etc.)?
- Who might be your future producers?
- Why are certain groups (e.g. women) not represented?
- Are women excluded because of factors associated with being female (gender-based constraints) such as not having access to large pieces of land? What can be done to address these factors and overcome these constraints? At what cost?
- Would my business benefit from including these groups? How



To encourage greater involvement of women in contract seed production, consider establishing a quota for the number of women contract seed growers. For example, you may decide to recruit women as 20-30% of your seed growers. It is important to make sure that the criteria used to select contract growers do not discriminate against women. For example, rather than land ownership, consider using control over land as a requirement. One way to involve women more directly in contract seed production is to establish contracts with households, including both men and women, rather than with individuals (mainly men). Where married women provide labor on seed plots, provide technical training to both husbands and wives and encourage male seed growers to share some of their earnings with their wives, or allocate a portion of land to them. Consider establishing contracts with farmers' groups or women's groups, as it is often easier for women to operate and access land and labor in groups rather than working as individuals.

Whether or not a company will seek to have more diversity among its contract growers and work with more women farmers will depend on several factors, including the additional costs involved and profitability in the short and long term. Companies should seek to take advantage of all opportunities and talents that exist in farming communities, challenge their assumptions about who should produce seed, and weigh the costs and benefits of being more gender-responsive.

3.2 Integrating gender in your marketing mix

Seed companies have traditionally not paid much attention to the different needs of men and women farmers. To maximize profits, seed companies should seek to deliberately target women and young farmers as clients. This section discusses how seed companies can be more gender-responsive in terms of their products, prices, promotional strategies and places of sale.

Know your clients

While small-scale men and women farmers have many things in common, they differ in other ways due to women's disadvantaged position in society generally. Women face greater challenges than men in obtaining information about new maize varieties and in buying seed from the formal sector.

Box 3: Challenges women face in getting information about agriculture and buying certified seeds.

Some challenges women face		Outcome	
Higher rates of illiteracy, especially in official languages			Difficulty reading seed package labels, printed materials generally, and billboards
More work looking after the home (cooking, cleaning, fetching water), looking after children and doing farm work			No time to visit an agro-dealer, attend agricultural events such as demonstrations, agricultural fairs or listen to radio programs
Not allowed in some cultures to travel away from their homestead			Unable to visit an agro-dealer, attend agricultural events such as demonstrations, agricultural fairs
Smaller plots			Interested in smaller package sizes
Less money to spend on inputs (seed of improved maize varieties, fertilizer, pesticides etc.)			More interested in open pollinated maize varieties rather than hybrid maize varieties
Less contact with extension/rural advisory services and seed company representatives			Less awareness about new varieties and technologies; less knowledge about good agricultural practices

Information and labels

To address the needs of women and men with low levels of education, companies should pay attention to how they provide information. Where possible, don't only rely on written information. Labels on seed packages should be in the local language, with a lot of pictures and symbols so that low literacy groups can easily identify products and understand instructions for using them.

Product distribution

Being gender-aware when designing a product distribution strategy means making efforts to ensure that your target customers -- men, women, youth – have access to your products. Seed companies often distribute seed through different channels including their own retail shops, their own mobile marketing teams, agro-dealers, supermarkets and other outlets. As mentioned earlier, women often find it difficult to travel to purchase certified seed, so consider involving local seed sellers such as agro-dealers, village stockists, traders and lead farmers in distributing your products. Working with these types of actors provides many opportunities, as they can provide information and advice together with seed, host demonstrations, and offer local credit arrangements. However, local seed merchants need to be trained and monitored to prevent the sale of poor quality or fake seeds.

Packaging size and price

Maize seed is often packaged in large quantities of interest to medium- or large-scale farmers, whereas women, especially if they grow maize on their own plots, typically plant a smaller area compared to men. Quantities in large packages also sell at a higher cost, which may not be affordable for women and poorer farmers in general. Women may also face difficulties in transporting large bags of seed.

Providing several, smaller packaging sizes of seed helps to make seed affordable for women and men who do not have a lot of cash to spend, and who cultivate smaller plots. Smaller packages are also easier for women to transport.

As rural women often have less money/ income than men, seed companies and other suppliers should consider ways to make certified seed more affordable. Some options include:

- Bulk sales to women's groups
- Setting up a system of loyalty points and discounts
- Allowing clients to pay in installments
- Allowing clients to pay in kind e.g. grain buy-back by agro-dealers
- Working with local-level micro-finance programs such as rotating savings and credit
- Setting up credit guarantee schemes managed by cooperatives, NGOs and community-based organizations

A packet of MERU HB513, an early maturing drought-tolerant maize variety. Photo: CIMMYT/Kipenz Films

Maize seed packed in small and medium size quantities to distribute to diverse demographic groups- e.g. resource-poor farmers who own small plots of land. Photo: CIMMYT/Kipenz Films

Box 4: Self-reflection: Integrating gender into distribution networks

How is your current distribution network structured and why?

Who are your current customers – men? women? youth?

Do some distribution channels reach some demographic groups (men, women, youth) better than others? Why?

Who are your potential customers?

How can you effectively market to men? to women? to youth?

Is there scope for expanding your distribution networks so that they reach potential customers, especially women and youth, better?

What will different strategies mean for your costs and long-term benefits?

Product promotion

Creating awareness about and advertising new varieties and other products is important for boosting sales. Common promotional approaches include:

Box 5: Considerations for making promotional approaches more gender-responsive

Source: Kandiwa et al., 2018

Very often, seed companies, extension/advisory services and other organizations do not recognize that different approaches and strategies are needed to reach men and women producers and other end-users. The outcome of a "one-size fits all" approach is often that women are less aware of modern maize varieties than men, as mentioned earlier. Promotional efforts therefore need to be gender-sensitive by taking into account the constraints faced by women.

PROMOTIONAL APPROACH

Branded clothing

Radio advertisements, TV programs, videos etc.

GENDER CONSIDERATIONS

Common branded clothing such as t-shirts and caps are usually worn by men and may not be appropriate for women. Find out what women prefer. Items of interest to women include branded wrap cloths (kitenge, chitenje, lappa, wrappers), head gear/ties and cloth shopping bags

Women have less time than men to listen to radio or watch television and may not even have access to these communication channels. Messaging through mass media should be in the local language and aired during times that are convenient to both male and female audiences

PROMOTIONAL APPROACH

Printed materials

Road shows and agricultural fairs/shows

GENDER CONSIDERATIONS

Women tend to be less literate than men. Printed materials should be written in the local language where possible and use simple wording with plenty of illustrations

Consider the time and location of these events to ensure that both men and women can attend. If necessary, provide transportation to enable farmers to get to the event

Box 6: Self-reflection: Integrating gender into promotional strategies

Who are your customers in terms of gender, age, wealth, ethnicity etc.?

Where are customers located?

What are their sources of information about agriculture and new crop varieties? Do men, women and youth get information from the same sources? What sources are most important for each group? What sources are less important for each group?

Is there scope for improving your promotional efforts so that they reach potential customers, especially women and youth, better?

What will this mean for your costs and long-term benefits?

Collect information on women's and men's information and seed channels

The first step in designing a gender-sensitive promotional approach is to carry out a general situation analysis of farmers' information and seed channels. For efficiency, this situation analysis should be carried out in conjunction with research, NGOs or other organizations involved in seed dissemination. The objectives of the study are to identify target areas for product promotion; to obtain information on the role of women and men in maize production, on the information and seed channels used by men and women, and on the constraints that they face in accessing information about agriculture and new varieties in general; to evaluate the best mix of promotional approaches for reaching men and women; and to identify potential partners for promotional activities and evaluate their experience of promotional activities, including their strengths and weaknesses. Methods that can be used for a general situation analysis include key informant interviews, group interviews and formal surveys.

Two useful approaches for awareness creation and promotion

Promotional approaches fall into two broad categories: those that create awareness and provide information (radio, TV announcements, messaging, road shows, agricultural fairs, printed materials) and those that demonstrate the performance of maize varieties (demonstrations, field days, small seed packets). Ideally, it is best to use a combination of methods to both promote awareness and demonstrate performance. The following describes how to address gender issues in conducting demonstrations/field days and distributing small seed packets.

Demonstrations and field days:

These two approaches are highly effective in increasing awareness of new maize varieties for two main reasons. Firstly, demonstrations and field days demonstrate the actual performance of varieties from planting to harvesting, which can be understood by all farmers, regardless of educational level. Secondly, demos can also be used to promote good agronomic practices (e.g. timing of planting, weeding, harvesting, correct spacing etc.). Distributing small packets of maize seed during demonstrations and field days is an excellent practice for encouraging farmers to adopt new varieties. To ensure that demos and field days are gender-sensitive, it important to pay attention to who hosts these events, where they are located, how information is provided about the events and how they are organized.

The selection of farmers to host demonstrations and field days is often biased toward men and people of high status. Ensure that other categories of farmers including individual women and young people from different socio-economic groups and women's groups have the opportunity to host demonstrations and field days. Rather than leaving the task of selecting farmers to extension or seed company representatives, a more participatory process led by communities should be considered.

Typically, organizers prefer to locate demos in central places such as on roadsides. However, such demos are less likely to be seen by women in particular due to their limited physical mobility. Guided by information from the situation analysis, it is preferable to hold demos in a variety of areas frequented by different groups e.g. women, youth, etc. The design of signs used at demonstration plots also need to be gender-sensitive. As women tend to be less literate than men, especially in official languages, signs need to be in the local language and use simple language and illustrations. Demos and field days need to be planned well in advance, based on input from both men and women in the community, and widely publicized locally through multiple channels in order to reach both men and women. Setting the day and time for such events should take into consideration women's schedules. Organizers should also provide child care to encourage the participation of women with babies and small children. Efforts should be made to ensure that women feel comfortable expressing their views.

Demonstrations and field days provide an opportunity to obtain information on the varietal preferences of men and women producers. Managing data from these events is therefore important for effective feedback loops. Data bases on demonstrations should include gender-disaggregated data on farmers who host demonstrations/field days, participants and georeferenced locations. A sample form in Annex 1 provides an example of the type of information that is useful to collect from farmers attending a demonstration or field day.

Small seed packets:

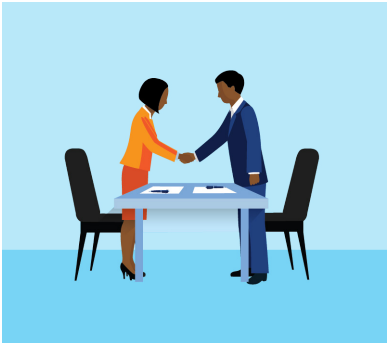
Providing small packets of seed of new varieties to farmers free of charge or for minimal cost encourages farmers to try new varieties with little or no risk. Small packets provide between 100 g to 2 kg and may cost the same as a cup of tea. Anecdotal evidence suggests that women are just as likely as men to purchase small seed packets (Sperling and Boettiger, 2013) but attention needs to be paid to where packets are made available and how they are advertised, to ensure that women can easily access them. Small seed packets can be distributed during demos/field days, agricultural fairs, through health clinics, schools, churches, mosques, and women's groups, or sold through agro-dealers, small shops or local markets. Information for the communications situation analysis can be used to identify the most appropriate channels for reaching women with small seed packets. Distributing small seed packets through various channels, particularly through women's groups, health clinics and local markets, and setting a quota for the number of women receiving packets are effective ways to target women.

4. Building gender-equitable seed companies

It is not enough for seed companies to be gender-responsive with customers; they need to be gender-responsive and socially inclusive in their overall philosophy, which includes staffing and other areas of human resource policy. In short, seed companies should seek to build organizations where diversity promotes growth.

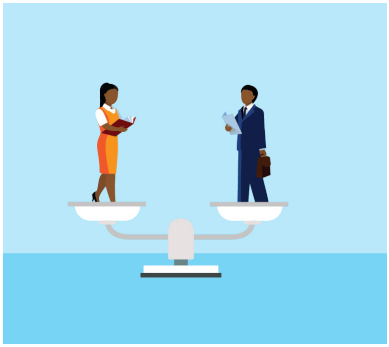
Action in four areas can help achieve this goal:

Recruitment:



Many seed companies only hire women for certain tasks that usually involve manual labor. Women may not be represented in some positions, especially at management levels. Gender equality principles that apply to the recruitment stages include using gender-neutral language in job descriptions, advertising positions through channels used by both women and men, ensuring that both men and women are represented in the recruitment team and interview panels and that the interview and selection process are non-discriminatory. It may also be important to aim to hire a certain number of women for certain jobs.

Creating and fostering a gender-equitable workplace:



Companies have the duty to ensure that both women and men have equal opportunities in the company, including equal pay for the same work. Barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workforce should be removed, and discrimination on the basis of gender eliminated, particularly discrimination in relation to family and caring responsibilities. Parental leave for both female and male employees and child care facilities are some of the benefits that seed companies should provide. Companies are also responsible for ensuring that women and men do not experience sexual harassment in the workplace and should take strong action against such cases.

Capacity-building in gender awareness:

Seed companies should provide general training on gender awareness for all staff, and specific training on gender skills for relevant staff, especially those dealing with product promotion and distribution.

Gender-equality policy in the workplace:

Seed companies should develop a gender-equality policy to ensure the enforcement of equal opportunities for women and men. The policy should cover all aspects of company operations including seed multiplication, distribution and promotion.

CIMMYT has developed a tool to help seed companies assess their level of gender-responsiveness and identify areas that need improvement (see annex 2).

4.2 Final words

A successful seed business depends not only on efficient technical operations but also on meeting the needs of its customers, staff and collaborators. As this manual shows, recognizing that men and women producers and all those involved in all the stages in seed production and distribution may have different needs and interests, and that addressing these different needs makes economic sense and will benefit your business.

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Annex 1: Field Day Attendance Form

Date:			Enumerator:		Supervisor:	
Name:			Sublocation:		Village:	
Mobile No:			Marital Status		Are you a Farmer?	
Sex	Age Group:____		Primary and secondary occupation		Language	
Spouse Resident in area	1=Yes	2=No	Spouse Attendance		1=Yes	2=No
1st Field Day Ever	1=Yes	2=No	# FDs Last Year		# FDs This Year	
Distance to Field Day (km)			Means of Transport		Education	
Info Source			Community/religious Leadership			
Private Sector Rep			Government Official/Political Leader			

Codes

Marital Status: 1=Married 2=Single, never married; 3=Divorced; 4=Widowed

Farmer: 1=Yes 2=No;

Age: 1= < 18; 2= 19-35; 3=36-60; 4=>60

Means of transport: 1=Walk; 2=Bicycle; 3=Motorbike/Tuk-tuk; 4=Bus/minivan; 5=Cart; 6=Other;

Education: 1=No formal education; 2=Primary; 3=Secondary; 4=College/University

Information Source: 1= Government extension; 2=NGO; 3=Friend/Neighbor; 4= Spouse; 5= Farmer cooperative; 6=Research Institution; 7=Agro-dealer; 8=Radio; 9=Newspaper; 10=Mobile Phone/text message; 11=Flyer; 12=Seed Company; 13=Farmer Group; 14 =Church/Mosque; 15=Public meeting called by local authorities; 16=Other.

Community/religious Leadership: 1=Farmer; 2=Village leader 3= Chief or leader at higher level; 4= Local/National Political Leader; 5=Business/company Representative 6=Other

Private Sector Representative 1=Yes; 2=Non-Government Official/Political Leader 1=Yes; 2=No

Annex 2: Gender-Responsiveness Self-assessment Tool for Seed Companies

Brief Description of the gender-responsiveness self-assessment tool

This tool was developed to help seed companies assess how gender-responsive they are in their operations along the seed supply value chain and in the workplace. It consists of a matrix table which covers good practices related to 3 areas: gender in the workplace; gender in seed-related operations; and gender in product positioning. With regard to practices in the three areas, the tool guides companies to assess and reflect on five questions:

- How easy is to implement specific good gender practices?
- What is the cost of implementing these practices?
- Should the company decide to implement these practices?
- What is the anticipated timeline for starting implementation?
- What are the target goals (time for completion, percent of completion by certain time of the year)?

The tool deliberately avoids prescribing comparative "weights" for each theme. Rather, it is designed to help units/departments in seed companies reflect and use their own value system to determine the following: what is important? why is an issue/aspect important? and when can the company begin to make changes? It is anticipated that the tool will be used by company managerial teams (CMTs) to score each of the indicators in the matrix and plan how they will proceed to implement good gender practices.

While the starting point or initial conditions are important, companies are encouraged to use the tool to focus on their progress in becoming more gender-responsive over time. It is not where a company is that matters; rather it is the direction the company is taking and the pace at which it endeavors to achieve its self-determined goals.

Part A: Gender in the Workplace

Main themes	Good Practice	Ease of Implementation Scoring: 1=Easy, 2=Moderate; 3= Difficult	Cost Scoring: 1=Low cost; 2=Medium cost; 3=High cost	Decision Scoring: 1=Yes; 2= No	Timeline for inception
Organizational policy	Gender Policy				
	Gender Guidelines				
	Gender Position Statement/ Philosophy				
Job tasks	Statistics collected on men and women doing specific tasks				
	Equal pay for equal work				
	Gender balance in marketing teams				
Leadership	At least 10% of senior managers are women				
	At least 20% of heads of department are women				
	At least 30% of board members are women				
	Policy on Inheritance				
	At least 40% of shares owned by women				

Recruitment and Retention	At least half of the interviewed panel are women				
	Gender awareness included in orientation and training of staff				
	Mentorship system for new male and female staff				
	Maternity/ paternity leave policy				
	Flex-time for nursing mothers and nursing rooms on site				
	Policy on Gender in the workplace				
	Sexual Harassment Policy				

Part B: Gender in Seed-related Operations

Main themes	Good Practice	Ease of Implementation Scoring: 1=Easy, 2=Moderate; 3= Difficult	Cost Scoring: 1=Low cost; 2=Medium cost; 3=High cost	Decision Scoring: 1=Yes; 2= No
Breeding	Both men and women involved in product evaluation in equal numbers			
	Gender-responsive approaches and tools used for varietal assessment and advancement			
Seed Production	Criteria for selecting seed producers do not discriminate against women			
	Women registered as seed producers			
	Women's groups involved in seed producing			
	Training provided to women seed producers, whether or not they are registered as seed producers			
	All spouses involved in seed production sign contract			
	All spouses engaged in seed production involved in payment processes			

Data collection with a gender lens and targeting	All data collected on seed producers is disaggregated by gender			
	Data on volumes of seeds produced collected by gender			
	Data on quality of seeds produced collected by gender			

Part C: Gender in Product Positioning

Main themes	Good Practice	Ease of Implementation Scoring: 1=Easy, 2=Moderate; 3= Difficult	Cost Scoring: 1=Low cost; 2=Medium cost; 3=High cost	Decision Scoring: 1=Yes; 2= No
Products	Products available in different packaging sizes (e.g. less, than 2 kg, and 5 kg)			
	Language on labels appropriate for contexts			
	Symbols used on labels can be easily understood by people with low literacy			
	Procurement support for women-owned businesses			
	Payment plans for women farmers			
	Payment plans for women agro-dealers/stockists			
Price	Discounts for bulk purchases for women's groups			
Place of sale	Support provided for women agro-dealers			
	Distribution/sale strategies to reach women specifically are being implemented			
	Gender-disaggregated metrics on seed sales regularly collected			

Promotion	At least 30% of the promotional resources are targeting women			
	Gender-responsive budgeting used for promotional activities			
	Participatory approaches involving community members used for selecting demo/field day hosts			
	At least 50% of demos hosted by women			
	At least 50% of field days convened at women-managed demos			
	At least 50% of speakers at field days are women			
	At least 50% of seed packs distributed to women			
	Branded clothing items preferred by women available			
	At least one promotional product profiling a woman			

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