Gender and Ethnicity in Vietnam
Agroforestry Landscapes: Lessons for Project Implementation
Contents

About this brief 3

Gender and Ethnicity in Vietnam Agroforestry Landscapes: Lessons for Project Implementation 4

Introduction 5

Conducting the research 7

Results of the research 10

What do these research findings mean for future project interventions? 25

Summary of key recommendations 29

References 34
About this brief

The brief summarizes learnings and outcomes from the Agroforestry for Livelihoods (AFLi) project, implemented by World Agroforestry (ICRAF) in Northwestern Vietnam. The project took place in two phases over the period of 2011 to 2021 and sought to encourage farmers to adopt agroforestry systems to combat environmental degradation and to diversify their agricultural products. The second phase of the project (AFLi-II) focused on the development of market-based agroforestry and forest rehabilitation.

The brief explores the benefits to women from participating in six AFLi exemplar landscapes and the gender-based constraints and opportunities women faced in participating in and benefiting from the project focusing on two ethnic minority groups including a Thai community in Hat Lot, Son La province and a H’mong community in Tea Tinh, Dien Bien province. The brief highlights the implications of barriers to women’s empowerment in agriculture to the success of agricultural interventions. Lastly, it provides recommendations for agricultural projects and extension staff to become more gender responsive.

Agroforestry for Livelihoods of Smallholder Farmers in Northwest Vietnam (AFLI) Project

Recognizing the potential of agroforestry, ICRAF Vietnam, with support from the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and the Research program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry of Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), implemented a comprehensive agroforestry and forest rehabilitation research program with local partners in Northwest Vietnam.

Please use this link to access further information on AFLI: www.worldagroforestry.org.
Introduction

Agricultural extension services offer support to enhancing agricultural productivity within the context of local communities, yet women are repeatedly left behind due to socio-cultural norms, limited access to information and gendered resource allocation (FAO, 2019). Agricultural innovation for smallholder farmers is highly gendered within patriarchal family structures (Kawarazuka and Prain, 2019), where women are often positioned in relation to their husbands and perceived as ‘farmer’s wives’ instead of professional farmers themselves (Brandth, 2002; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2010). This perception has led to women’s exclusion from agricultural trainings limiting their access to tools and information.

VIETNAMESE CONTEXT

Agricultural development projects are faced with a unique challenge in Vietnam due to the presence of 53 recognized ethnic minority groups who made up only 14% of the population but 73% of the country’s poor in 2016 (World Bank, 2019), and who differ in cultural norms and nuanced contexts within the country. Additionally, more than 81% of the ethnic minority population was employed in agriculture in 2017 (UN Women, 2017). In comparison with their male counterparts, ethnic minority women have lower levels of education, younger working ages, less likelihood of owning agricultural machinery, poorer proficiency in Vietnamese, and less likelihood of owning a motorcycle; a distinct obstacle for the 15 ethnic minority groups who live 20-70 km from their respective ‘local’ markets (UN Women, 2017).

Women are additionally disadvantaged with respect to decision-making power at the household level, although this is notably shifting as seasonal migration is leaving more female-headed households in the wake of absent men (Green Climate Fund, 2020; Kawarazuka and Prain, 2018). However, female-headed households experience different barriers to male-headed households such as being more likely than male-headed households to experience labour shortages and difficulties in accessing loans and information; as a result, female-headed households are less likely to adopt agroforestry practices, despite expressing more interest in this practice than men in some cases (Catacutan and Naz, 2015).
Conducting the research

An assessment was carried out to determine the benefits to women from participating in the six AFLi exemplar landscapes in Na Nhan, Toa Tinh, Hat Lot, Chiem Yen, Xa Ho and Thuong Bang La communes in the Dien Bien, Son La and Yen Bai provinces. The main ethnic minority farmers in the region are Thai, H’mong, Kinh, Muong, and Tay. The assessment was initially carried out through a survey focusing on individual social benefits such as improved awareness, knowledge and skills on agroforestry implementation, farmer networks, and farmers’ use and dissemination of project materials.

Two case studies conducted in Hat Lot and Toa Tinh communes complemented the initial quantitative survey, focusing on the Thai and H’mong ethnic minorities, two of the six minority groups which have populations over one million people in Vietnam (UN Women, 2017). The case studies sought to understand in more depth the gender-based constraints and opportunities women faced to participate and benefit from the project.

The objectives of the study were to:

- Assess the benefits and constraints of women participating in six AFLi exemplar landscapes.
- Observe and compare key constraints to women’s livelihoods and access to agricultural extension services in two case studies.
- Determine the implications of barriers to women’s empowerment in agriculture to the success of agricultural intervention.
- Give recommendations to allow agricultural projects and extension staff to be more gender responsive.
- Assess the effects of cultural nuance on women’s uptake of agricultural innovations.

What is an exemplar landscape?

A landscape is a geographic area with sufficient size, diversity, and complexity to capture the various dimensions of social resilience, climate resilience and ecosystem service linkages. An exemplar landscape is a smaller geographic area within the broader landscape that is selected for focused work. Exemplar landscapes typically comprise:

- Differing socio-economic and cultural aspects, health and nutrition statuses;
- Ecosystem services; and
- Varying value chains and collectives.

Hat Lot and Toa Tinh Communes

The Thai community of Na Ban village in Hat Lot commune of Son La province was established in 1960, and all households have land certificates. The average land holding in Na Ban is 2-3 ha/household with an additional 200-300 sqm for the home and garden.

In Dien Bien province, Toa Tinh commune is home to seven villages: Hua Xa B being the most developed. The Toa Tinh Commune was established in 1952 and is now home to more than 2000 people, all of whom belong to the H’mong ethnic group.

Thai groups in the Northwest generally live in the middle altitudinal zone (600-800 masl) while H’mong live at higher altitudes (above 800 masl). This has major implications for the communities’ respective mobility in terms of distance to markets and access to resources; especially given the seasonal effect of rain on the conditions of the soil-topped roads characteristic of the highland regions in the Northwest.

Locations of the six exemplar landscapes and the Toa Tinh and Hat Lot communes
Compared to female farmers not involved in the project, women participating in the AFLI-II exemplar landscapes gave higher scores to the mitigating climate change impacts, improving biodiversity, providing food, and improving knowledge and skills. Their scoring was based on observations of project agroforestry systems of their own or of others in the village.

### Results of the research

#### WOMEN’S BENEFITS FROM PARTICIPATING IN AFLI EXEMPLAR LANDSCAPES

**Women’s perceptions of agroforestry benefits**

Compared to female farmers not involved in the project, women participating in the AFLI-II exemplar landscapes gave higher scores to the agroforestry benefits of improving soil moisture, mitigating climate change impacts, improving biodiversity, providing food, and improving knowledge and skills. Their scoring was based on observations of project agroforestry systems of their own or of others in the village.
Increased knowledge and skills

- Technical support was provided to farmers through trainings on agroforestry system establishment, management as well as grafting technique and nursery management. Over 70% of female farmers participated in training activities, yet only 15% of them participated in nursery activities as nursery management was considered difficult for women, especially the grafting technique.

- Over 80% of women were willing to share their knowledge with family members, neighbours, and friends in their villages. Their newly acquired knowledge included tree management techniques, fertilizer application, watering and grafting techniques, and pest management. The women wished to have more trainings specifically on fruit tree management and pest and disease control.

Adoption of agroforestry options and soil/water conservation techniques

- Sixty-four percent of women participating in exemplar landscapes confirmed that they would like to expand their agroforestry systems (n=95).

- Forty-five percent of women not involved in the project wanted to adopt/expand agroforestry systems (n=22).

- The most preferred agroforestry systems were fruit tree-based systems.

Adoption of soil and water conservation techniques

- All the interviewed women were aware of decreasing water availability, 66% of them observed soil erosion on their farms and the negative impacts of soil erosion on soil quality or crop yield.

- None of the women confirmed that they knew how to implement soil conservation techniques including tree planting, grass planting on contour lines, or terraced farming in agroforestry fields.

- The most common response was “don’t know how to do” followed by:
  1. Lack of management techniques;
  2. Lack of finance;
  3. Cattle damage; and
  4. Lack of labour to manage forage grass and fruit trees.

Social benefits

- Social benefits included improved teamwork, connection with other farmers, ability to talk in public, improved decision making and the confidence to implement agroforestry techniques as well as enhanced community forest management.

- A high percentage of women from farmer groups that had been participating in the project for a long time (such as Hat Lot exemplar landscape) were receiving social benefits.

- The main recognizable benefits were site visitations, network expansion, the broadening of knowledge and receipt of information. Farmers learned that they could broaden their network and benefit from teamwork when everyone becomes more active in sharing information, exchanging knowledge, and solving problems together.

Women’s social benefits resulting from project activities (n=95)

- Participation in project activities:
  - 72% Participated in project activities
  - 15% Participated in project nurseries
  - 81% Willing to share project knowledge

- Improved...
Both the young Thai men and women perceived an improvement in their degree of power and freedom over the 5-year period. The men perceived a slightly greater improvement than the women (1.9 and 1.1, respectively). Old Thai men perceived no change to their power and freedom over the period, whereas the old Thai women showed a slight increase (0.5).
### H'mong group in Toa Tinh commune

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Level 5</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almost no power and freedom to make decisions</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power and freedom to make all major life decisions</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Young H'mong men perceived a decline (-1) in their power and freedom whereas the young H'mong women perceived a substantial improvement (1.6) in theirs over the 5-year period. Old H'mong men perceived a slight decline (-0.8) in their power and freedom over the five-year period, whereas the old H'mong women showed a slight increase (0.9).

### Project Implications

- **Decision-making power and prevailing patriarchal social structures formed barriers to the accessibility of agricultural training for women from both ethnic communities.**
  - **Decision-making**
    - Women were better educated and so were consulted more in decision-making.
    - Women participated in community activities.
    - Men assisted with domestic responsibilities.
    - Women had access to clean tap water.

- **Project activities enhanced women’s social capital and confidence, contributing to their overall empowerment.**
  - Women had more perceived power, in line with their male counterparts, than H’mong women. Going forward, it will be important to address the needs of each community and encourage project participation whilst being respectful of household dynamics and not exacerbating tension between family members.

- **The communities had different levels of access to education, food and water which impacted the accessibility of extension training.**

### Women's Power and Freedom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>5yrs ago</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>5yrs ago</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>5yrs ago</th>
<th>Present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young men</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old men</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young women</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old women</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Thai Women**
  - Women were better educated and so were consulted more in decision-making.
  - Women participated in community activities.
  - Men assisted with domestic responsibilities.
  - Women had access to clean tap water.

- **H’mong Women**
  - Women were less educated and so were consulted less in decision-making.
  - Women were less participatory in community activities as culturally men represent families in social settings.
  - Men were less inclined to partake in domestic responsibilities.
  - Women did not have access to clean tap water.
The results indicated a divide in labour responsibilities according to gender for both the Thai and H'mong communities. Women were typically responsible for small livestock, fruit and vegetable production and home gardens. Men purchased and applied inputs such as pesticides, seedlings, and fertilizers. The main differences identified between the communities were that H'mong women did not sell produce at markets and Thai women were slightly more empowered in that they were almost equitably trained and held autonomous domains.

### Labour division

#### Thai group
- **Purchasing inputs**
- **Receiving inputs from project staff**
- **Carrying inputs to the field**
- **Participating in training**
- **Transporting produce home**
- **Herding livestock**
- **Attending community meetings**
- **Harvesting maize, coffee & fruit**
- **Selling fruit**
- **Collecting livestock forage**
- **Applying inputs and weeding**
- **Selling maize**
- **Harvesting rice**
- **Feeding poultry**
- **Selling produce at markets**
- **Selling livestock**

#### H'mong group
- **Purchasing inputs**
- **Receiving inputs from project staff**
- **Carrying inputs to the field**
- **Participating in training**
- **Transporting produce home**
- **Herding livestock**
- **Attending community meetings**
- **Harvesting maize, coffee & fruit**
- **Selling fruit**
- **Collecting livestock forage**
- **Applying inputs and weeding**
- **Selling maize**
- **Harvesting rice**
- **Feeding poultry**
- **Selling produce at markets**
- **Selling livestock**

### Project implications

- **Labour division**
  - **Thai Women**
    - Training of men and women was relatively equal.
    - Women sold products at the market.
  - **H'mong Women**
    - Women were less participatory in training.
    - H'mong men sold products at the market.

- **Women were responsible for small livestock, fruit and vegetable production, home gardens and selling products at home.**
- **Rice farming was a shared responsibility, although men were responsible for selling it at a larger scale than local markets offered.**
- **The daily labour of both communities was affected by poor road conditions.**

### Infrastructural barriers mentioned included poor road conditions (both communities), irrigation equipment (Thai women said they are often responsible for carrying water to fields) and clean household water (H’mong women did not have access to clean tap water). This highlighted the potential for extension initiatives to provide interventions that could contribute to reducing women’s time poverty.
Access to resources

The distribution of assets and resources was highly gendered, where patriarchal norms influenced women's access. Since men and women in Thai communities were more equal in many spheres than in H'mong communities, it was no surprise that this was the same in their resource distribution. In both communities, women held more perceived ownership of resources in the domains in which they were responsible, such as in the home garden or with small livestock, however, male dominance in ownership was more pronounced in H'mong family assets.

Resource ownership and use

**a. Thai**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived ownership</th>
<th>Actual user</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farming resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural machinery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home garden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large livestock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small livestock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural inputs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural produce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorbikes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**b. H'mong**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived ownership</th>
<th>Actual user</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farming resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural machinery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home garden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large livestock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small livestock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural inputs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural produce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorbikes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Access to information was a vital constraint that perpetuated the norm that men were decision-makers thereby enhancing their perceived ownership, where women had limited access to information and so left final decisions to men, especially in H’mong families. Additionally, language barriers in extension materials and in working with traders in the local market were a constraint for women who often had limited working knowledge of Vietnamese and struggled with the jargon in technical training materials. This was a barrier expressed by men and women in both ethnic groups but seemed to be a specific barrier for H’mong women who had the added cultural norm that men are responsible for communications outside the family.

Enhancing women's social capital by engaging in project activities provided an opportunity for women to utilize improved decision-making power, networking, and public communication to take more ownership of their time and resources.

Project implications

There was a prevailing assumption in both communities that men held ownership of ‘shared’ resources, specifically land and machinery, and that women had relative freedom to use them, however social norms were a likely obstacle, especially in the H’mong community where husbands and wives were less collaborative than in Thai households.

Thai Women

Resource ownership was split more equally between men and women.

- Women perceived themselves as the owners of home gardens and small livestock.
- Men owned agricultural equipment and machinery which women had relative freedom to use, although they tended to use the smaller equipment.

H’mong Women

Men were the sole owners of nearly all resources except home gardens and small livestock.

- Access to information was a vital constraint that perpetuated the norm that men were decision-makers thereby enhancing their perceived ownership, where women had limited access to information and so left final decisions to men, especially in H’mong families.
- Additionally, language barriers in extension materials and in working with traders in the local market were a constraint for women who often had limited working knowledge of Vietnamese and struggled with the jargon in technical training materials. This was a barrier expressed by men and women in both ethnic groups but seemed to be a specific barrier for H’mong women who had the added cultural norm that men are responsible for communications outside the family.
Gendered time distribution

It was found that women and men spent nearly equal amounts of time on agricultural work across both communities (a 36-minute difference in the Thai community and only an 18-minute difference in the H'mong community). Men spent less time on domestic work than women (0.5 hours less in the Thai community and 4.2 hours less in the H'mong community). The H'mong women had no time allocated to leisure activities and slept for nearly two hours less than the men.

- Women and men spent nearly equal amounts of time on agricultural work.
- Men spent less time on domestic work than women.
- Women had less leisure time than men.

In both communities, it was mentioned that time-saving interventions such as improving roads and access to machinery would lessen time poverty. Although project activities enhanced efficiency and productivity in agricultural activities, women’s time constraints were a significant barrier to them receiving the benefits of extension services.

Summary of key findings: time distribution findings and the project implications

Thai Women
- Women spent less time on domestic work and were assisted more by men.
- Women had similar amounts of sleep as the men.
- Women had some daily leisure time, but it was nearly an hour less than the men.

H’mong Women
- Women spent a large amount of time on domestic work.
- Women slept for almost 2 hours less than men.
- Women had no daily leisure time.

- Women and men spent nearly equal amounts of time on agricultural work.
- Men spent less time on domestic work than women.
- Women had less leisure time than men.

Time distribution

Thai Women
- Field work: 6.9 hours
- Nights sleep: 7.9 hours
- Domestic work: 2.2 hours
- Leisure: 2 hours
- Lunch: 1.5 hours

H’mong Women
- Field work: 6.4 hours
- Nights sleep: 7.4 hours
- Domestic work: 6.4 hours
- Leisure: 2.2 hours
- Lunch: 1.5 hours

Gendered 24hr time-wheels for the Thai (a) and H’mong (b) communities
### Summary of the key agricultural interests of the Thai and Hmong women and the project implications

#### Agricultural interests

**Thai Women**
- Women were better educated and had more freedom to use machinery, so they were interested in larger machinery training.
- Women had access to clean tap water and were interested in irrigation systems.
- Women were interested in complex agricultural techniques such as grafting.

**Hmong Women**
- Women were less educated and had less freedom to use machinery and so were interested in small equipment training.
- Women wanted to obtain clean tap water before they considered irrigation systems.
- Women were interested in basic agricultural techniques such as maintaining livestock health.

- Women were interested in fruit tree production and selling and pest and disease management.
- Women were interested in accessible extension materials.
- Women were interested in improving infrastructure such as roads.

#### Project implications

**Thai women**
- Women expressed their interest in building upon their agricultural knowledge and practices in domains that would impact their daily lives, but which had barriers to accessibility.
- Women had access to clean tap water and were not concerned with household water sources, whereas Hmong women experienced the inverse. Thai women instead mentioned their desire for field irrigation systems since their household water needs were being met.

**Hmong women**
- Women were interested in large machinery such as trucks and tractors, whereas Hmong women mentioned their interest in smaller, more accessible machinery such as sprayers.

- It is important to note going forward that while project activities increase women’s technical skills, the widespread adoption of innovative methods is dependent on how accessible and relevant the methods proposed are.

- Women were interested in accessible extension materials with limited jargon, in ethnic dialects, shorter and more concise information, video training, and in-field demonstrations.

- In future, project activities which increase women’s communication skills and confidence may influence collaboration in these communities.

- Both Thai and Hmong women expressed their role in market traders since products were sold for and that they often felt manipulated by the conditions set by traders.
- In response to this, young Hmong men suggested that formal support would be beneficial in maintaining more stable trading conditions, Hmong women did not comment on solutions to this problem, even though they were concerned.
What do these research findings mean for future project interventions?

**WOMEN’S INVOLVEMENT IN PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

In the Thai ethnic community, husbands and wives collaborated on decision-making, although the husband generally had the final say. Though this varies between households, women in the Hat Lot commune, especially the younger generation, were more educated and their opinions were increasingly respected and heard. This contrasted with the H’mong group as even though men and women perceived their decision-making to be collaborative to some degree, the women were disproportionately less educated and therefore decision-making power was left to the husband; a power dynamic which, in addition to the effects of pervasive alcoholism and domestic violence in the community, affected women's confidence and participation in decision-making.

Decision-making power is a key determinant in women's capacity to participate and benefit from project activities as it influences women's ability to implement the things they have learned and to re-distribute their time and labour.

In both the Thai and H’mong communities, women were heavily constrained by domestic activities, however, they invested an equal amount of time in agricultural activities as men in their daily lives. There was some expectation for Thai men to offer help in household domestic duties which indicated a level of support for Thai women. H’mong men were less inclined to contribute to household chores.

Project activities need to consider the time constraints of local women, not just in scheduling agricultural trainings, but also in the approaches and materials used. Both men and women identified difficulties in engaging with extension materials that were not in their native tongue (even those who had a high degree of competency in Vietnamese struggled with the jargon).

H’mong women disproportionately lacked fluency in the language and struggled more in understanding materials in Vietnamese. This not only perpetuated unequal access to knowledge and power dynamics but also intensified women’s time-poverty as they needed to invest much more time and energy in engaging with the extension materials.

Participants identified several timesaving, accessible project materials e.g., poster boards, video presentations and in-field training activities.

Thai and H’mong women had different levels of access to education and resources and different positions in power dynamics both at household and community levels. These differences highlighted the importance of locally nuanced and community-driven interventions.
WOMEN’S INFLUENCE ON PROJECT SUCCESS

Despite the difficulties faced in engaging with extension materials, nearly 80% of female participants in both communities expressed willingness to share project information and knowledge obtained from village heads, extension workers and neighbours with family and peers.

Women were found to use informal channels of communication to obtain agricultural knowledge more than men in both communities. Therefore, transferring relevant information to women will likely reach those who do not necessarily have time to participate in trainings, and facilitating the establishment of community groups, or posting information in an accessible way (including the use of appropriate language, length, and visual presentation of information) in places where women congregate could help to effectively spread information.

H’mong women identified a dynamic where men were the holders of information and had their position strengthened through their participation in trainings while women’s knowledge was increasingly less valued. Ensuring that women take on leadership roles within their communities and increasing their agency over knowledge dissemination by targeting them for training will elevate their positions in their communities.

Dedicating efforts to facilitate women’s attendance in trainings and spreading information among community members through informal channels could significantly support the success of outreach projects.

Technology such as mobile phones, radio and television are increasingly being used by extension services to disseminate information, especially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Women’s access to information is critical to the success of project activities and appropriate channels of information should be prioritized to increase their participation.
Summary of key recommendations

THE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE SPLIT ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING FOUR CATEGORIES:

- Cultural norms
- Holistic adaptation
- Accessibility
- Time poverty

Cultural norms

Recommendation

Facilitate men’s involvement and understanding of women’s roles in agroforestry adoption

Reasoning

- Agricultural training which specifically targets women runs the risk of creating tension between men and women.
- Men are the primary decision-makers in patriarchal communities and so may block access to women’s activities if there is a misunderstanding of the importance of women’s roles.
- Trainings on nursery management should be provided more often to encourage women’s participation in nursery activities.

Focus on domains where women hold relative decision-making power

- Building women’s confidence in their decision-making skills is critical to empowerment, especially in domains in which women are highly involved, such as fruit trees and home vegetable gardens, or in domains where women are relatively autonomous.

Accessibility

Recommendation

Design diverse, economically sensitive practices

Reasoning

- Financial resources like collateral for loans and financial assistance are predominantly allocated to men.
- A variety of options should be made available to accommodate individual constraints which are sensitive to women’s autonomous domains or lack thereof.
- Preferential credit access should be made available to women who are heads of household or seeking innovation in their domains.

Ensure that project materials are accessible to all community members

- Ensuring women’s use of extension materials and participation in training should be sensitive to their proficiency with the language used, their skills and needs, and the presentation of materials.
- Short materials which are presented in places where women frequent and are translated into their ethnic languages will be more effective than extension packages with heavy wording that are time consuming to read.
- Language used needs to consider local dialects with different jargon and colloquialisms.
Holistic adaptation

Recommendation
Implement agricultural training that targets women from a wider community project base and addresses women’s time-poverty and empowerment needs.

Reasoning
A holistic approach to community intervention which offers training not just in agriculture but in language acquisition, finance and mechanization and offers women the chance to develop their sense of empowerment and confidence which contributes to a positive feedback loop of increased decision-making and participation in project activities.

Additional initiatives that would benefit communities and reduce time-poverty are loan-support schemes and investment in local infrastructure.

Identify indicators of time-poverty and constraints on women and incorporate them into the project framework.

Though project activities themselves are constrained by access to resources, extension services which do not provide on-going support during community transformation are likely to miss critical factors to women’s access as they arise.

Recommendation
Encourage women to lead in community development

Reasoning
Creating spaces where local women can identify their needs and collaborate with other families and encouraging women to take on community leadership and responsibility towards disseminating information in their own spheres and around their schedules, can empower them to have confidence in their knowledge and spread information effectively between them and to those who do not have time to attend regular training.

Extension support can similarly be supplied in tandem with the work of existing women’s associations.

Ensure that extension workers are representative of the people they are trying to reach, meaning female extension workers should be highly present in women’s project activities.

Provide adaptive training that is sensitive to the climate crisis and community evolution

Extension services need to include adaptive training that is responsive to changing climatic conditions, focusing on women’s domains and changing agricultural contexts. Adaptive measures should additionally consider policy support projects to ensure women’s rights and empowerment from government agencies.

Adaptation to unprecedented situations like the COVID-19 pandemic should include measures such as social-distanced training and the inclusion of gender-sensitive and accessible technologies for training purposes.

Maintaining on-going support that considers changing socio-cultural conditions is highly important in ensuring continual empowerment for communities, and extension plans should include support services, repeat activities/refresher courses, technological and information support, and evaluation procedures to ascertain changing community contexts.
**Time poverty**

**Reasoning**
- Consider the time constraints of women and propose project interventions that are sensitive to this and include support services such as childcare in tandem.
- Identify and address time-consuming constraints to communities.
- Both Thai and H'mong women are impacted by poor road conditions which consume time in their day-to-day activities.
- Training where individuals are met during their daily activities do not require a substantial time commitment from women who are time-constrained.
- Training on time-saving practices can reduce time spent in the field on a particular day.
- Training should occur regularly to ensure that participants retain relevant information.

**Recommendation**
- Project activities should not only accommodate women’s schedules by offering short, regular meetings which occur at varying times as dictated by members of the community but should also include resources to assist women in addressing their responsibilities such as childcare or meal services when activities overlap with scheduled meal preparation.
- Implement regular, in-field training sessions with individuals.
- Time-consuming constraints are nuanced and will differ between communities but impact women’s access to resources all the same.

---

**References**


