

Purchase for Progress - P4P

Gender Equity



QUICK FACTS

Participation: Since the beginning of the pilot, women's participation in P4P-supported farmers' organizations has quadrupled, going from **100,000** to **400,000**. Women make up **25%** of the P4P-supported farmers. However, this figure is skewed, as female membership in P4P rises to **47%** on average if Ethiopia is excluded. The relative weight of Ethiopia biases the results as P4P in Ethiopia targets Cooperative Unions with a large membership base where only 12% are women.

Leadership: **48%** of women occupy positions on P4P-affiliated farmers' organization boards globally.

Capacity development: Some **260,000** women have been trained in various capacities.

Gender sensitization: Over **51,000** farmers, WFP staff and stakeholders, both men and women, received training on gender issues.

Incomes: Women that have contributed to collective sales through P4P-supported FOs have earned an average of **US\$48** each year from crop sales.

Figures from December 2014

P4P and Gender Equity

Throughout the five year pilot, Purchase for Progress (P4P) has improved the lives and livelihoods of smallholder farmers who face many challenges in profiting from their agricultural labour. For women farmers, these challenges are compounded by deeply-rooted inequalities. Therefore, P4P adopted a gender transformative approach, directly focusing on women to ensure that they benefit from the project.

By adopting multifaceted interventions to address major constraints faced by women farmers, P4P has helped to promote gender equity and the economic empowerment of women in agriculture. As a result, P4P has seen women gain greater control over their lives and an enhanced voice in their communities and households.

Driving rural development

In developing countries, women are the backbone of the rural economy. Although they play a crucial role in agriculture, particularly food production, women's labour is often invisible, unpaid and undervalued, and they generally have less access to productive resources than male farmers. Plus, in many households, the production and marketing of crops and household finances are controlled by men. Involving women more fully in agriculture has the potential to drive economic development, increase food security and improve household welfare. According to the [UN Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#), if women had the same access to farming resources as men, they could increase yields by 20-30 percent, lifting 100-150 million people out of hunger.

Emerging lessons learned

Through the P4P pilot, WFP has learned a great deal about how market development can and cannot promote women's empowerment. These lessons are based on over five years of field experience piloting smallholder-friendly procurement models in 20 countries.

Working with women farmers

Reaching women farmers can be particularly challenging because they may not be active in farmers' organizations, and often produce crops for household consumption rather than sale. Recognizing the varied roles that women take on in the agricultural sector, the P4P [gender strategy](#) defined four general categories, of women producers, many of which often overlap. This allows for tailored support to meet women's different needs and interests:

- Producers and marketers of crops and products purchased through P4P
- Unpaid family workers
- Producers and petty traders of crops and products not currently purchased through P4P
- Casual agricultural labourers

Using this framework, P4P found that incorporating unpaid family workers in particular require further efforts.

Context is key

Strategies to empower women farmers cannot be 'one-size-fits-all'. To respond to variations in culture, religion and infrastructure, pilot countries carried out context- and culturally-specific assessments to determine the needs of women farmers and how to best address them.



World Food Programme

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Last update: August 2015



Mazouma Sanou is a 43-year old farmer and field monitor from Burkina Faso. She is married and the mother of three children. Mazouma is a member of a P4P-supported cooperative union called UPPA-Houet. Today, the union has 20,500 members, 11,000 of whom are women. Mazouma says that in her community, many women are using household negotiation skills to gain more voice in their households and communities.

"If you help one man you help one family if you help one woman you help the country."

UN Agencies work toward rural women's empowerment

In October 2012, FAO, IFAD, UN Women, and WFP launched a joint programme called "Accelerating Progress toward the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women". This programme aims to economically empower rural women by enhancing leadership opportunities, improving their food security and incomes and influencing policy environments to increase gender awareness. P4P is WFP's entry point in this partnership in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Liberia and Rwanda, and will be leading the joint activities in Guatemala and Rwanda.

Planting the seeds of empowerment

Efforts to improve women's economic situation must encourage mindset change. When gender sensitization takes into account the needs and desires of both men and women, it can open up opportunities for women to participate more fully in markets. Many gender sensitization efforts focused on demonstrating the economic benefits to households and communities when women are fully included in agriculture.

A **household negotiation tool** created by P4P provided a framework for families to discuss the management of household resources and led to the greater inclusion of women in decision-making. This approach proved effective in securing the buy-in of male family members as well as local leaders. Increasingly, men report that they see their entrepreneurial and economically independent wives as key partners in improving household welfare. This is an important shift from previous views that women's economic power somehow threatened the role of men in the household.

Increasing women's access to land and resources

Women farmers often have limited access to productive resources. In order to produce surplus, aggregate their crops and market them collectively, they require training in best agricultural practices, basic literacy, business and finance, as well as access to agricultural inputs and credit. The provision of **time- and labour-saving technologies** can assist women to produce more and divide their time more efficiently between agricultural and home labour.

In many contexts women farmers are not eligible to own or control land. In some cases, P4P has facilitated women's **access to land** individually or as a group. In others, such as Ethiopia, women have faced increased challenges participating in and profiting from P4P as they rarely own land and are not formally acknowledged as farmers.

Increasing sales of "women's crops"

One of the main lessons learned under P4P was that women's ability to market certain crops remains limited despite gender awareness efforts. In many societies, crops such as maize and sorghum are traditionally considered to be men's domain. Women generally grow pulses – such as cowpeas, beans and pigeon peas – on small plots, in limited quantities, for household consumption rather than sale. WFP responded by providing capacity development to increase pulse production and increasing the quantities of pulses purchased from women farmers. This enabled women to participate in P4P in their own right, selling a crop over which they have traditionally retained control of production and the income generated.

Assessing needs, adapting implementation

Any assessment of gender achievements must go beyond counting the number of women involved. Nuanced examinations of context-specific needs and the progress of ongoing efforts can inform new methods to most effectively facilitate the empowerment of women farmers.

Read more about P4P and women farmers:

[Unlocking the potential of women farmers](#)

[Increasing literacy leads to empowerment](#)

[Farmers' organizations drive change in Burkina Faso](#)

[Draft cattle lighten women's workloads](#)

[P4P opens doors for women in Ethiopia](#)

[Five rural women share their stories](#)



P4P's Women's Empowerment Pathways: Roadblocks and Successes 2014

Report
P4P's Women's Empowerment Pathways