



# STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING WOMEN FARMER'S PARTICIPATION IN SAPP AND PRIDE



## INTRODUCTION

The agriculture sector is an important sector in Malawi as it employs about 80 percent of the workforce and contributes over 80 percent of foreign exchange earnings. Female farmers provide 70 percent of the workforce and produce 80 percent of food for home consumption. However, gender disparities are among the major constraints that affect agriculture development. There are disparities between men and women in terms of access to and control over resources and benefits and unequal division of labour which affects women participation in agriculture production and related decision making processes. In addition, unfriendly marketing systems, mobility and migration predispose men and women farmers to HIV infection which further perpetuate the gender inequalities in the sector.

Addressing gender inequality is one of the prerequisites in attaining food, income and nutrition security hence SAPP, PRIDE and ERASP prioritize integration of gender and social inclusion into the programme interventions. Promoting participation of women in SAPP and PRIDE/ERASP is a strategic undertaking for enhancing productivity of farming households in the impacts.

## STRATEGIES

The following strategies should be used to promote the participation of women in the programme interventions:

- Deliberate Strategic Campaigns to encourage women participate and benefit from Agriculture services through various approaches and methods (e.g. meetings, radio programmes, field days, demonstrations, e.t.c)
  - Emphasize 60%:40% women to men farmers' participation ( or vice-versa depending on situation) in various agriculture interventions under the programs.
  - Reduce the women's walking distance and time requirement to access agriculture extension services through increasing the number of field days, on farm demonstrations, training sites, e.t.c
  - Increase use of competent and well trained female lead farmers as a way of increasing women participation in programme interventions.
  - Encourage farmer organizations to elect competent women into decision making positions to promote representation of women issues resulting in increased women participation.
  - Intensify gender mainstreaming trainings for staff, lead farmers and local leaders
- Upscale household approach
  - Promote entrepreneurship among women.
  - Introduce labour saving technologies such as cook stoves and conservation agriculture
  - Ensure the involvement and full participation of women from poorer and less educated backgrounds.
  - Training programs should take into account the following when designing, organizing and delivering any training for farmers:
    - Adapt training content to women's needs and skills.
    - Schedules training in consideration with women's existing workloads.
    - Provide training in agricultural and other productive activities, not just nutrition, home and family welfare topics.
    - Ensure the involvement and full participation of women from poorer and less educated backgrounds.
    - Use trainers who are not only technically competent on the subject matter including gender mainstreaming.
    - Shift more resources to village-based training rather than residential training.
  - Institute an award of best performing male and female frontline staff and lead farmers on gender mainstreaming in the programme.

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