

Bridging the Gap: DigitALL for the Women in the AgriFood Systems for Food and Nutrition Security

ARTICLE

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Women in the AgriFood system play a great role in stabilizing the food systems. They provide up to 70% of the agricultural labor and determine what households eat, thereby making them responsible for household food security and nutrition.

Despite this enormous contribution, they are grappling with challenges of access to and control over agricultural resources. This is exacerbated by negative social norms that relegate ownership of assets such as land and farm equipment to solely men. Women are often not involved in decision making over resources at household level and this extends to the proceeds from the agricultural produce. As a result, women farm all their lives only to end up with nothing as they lack ownership over both the land and the harvest. This not only increases the burden of domestic work but also makes them vulnerable to gender-based violence.

Farm technology is not only vital for improving farm production and productivity but also enhances market interactions for improved outputs. However, the low level of access to market information by women farmers results in them selling their produce at low farm gate prices.



All these challenges make women more vulnerable and explain why women continue to become more food insecure, hungry and malnourished despite being the largest percentage of food producers in the world. Evidence shows that when women are supported with the same access to agricultural inputs as men, their agricultural yields can increase by up to 30%.

This was experienced during FRA's piloting of the farm-planning model where women were supported with access to agricultural technology and at the end of this innovation; there was a marked improvement in food security and nutrition status of the beneficiaries. Further, research indicates that increasing women's ownership and control over assets helps to create success in pathways out of poverty. (IFPRI & ILRI, 2014).

As we celebrate this year's Women's day under the theme "[DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality](#)", let us purpose to bridge the technology gap through supporting women in the AgriFood system to take center stage in technology innovations. Let us collectively ensure that they are fully involved in agricultural technology product design so that the agricultural technologies developed are appropriate for the women farmers in the AgriFood system. Further, there should be deliberate investment to promote adoption of appropriate technologies that improve agricultural productivity, work efficiency, and market interactions among women farmers.

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