



**Guidebook for marketing
teams, agronomists,
and field staff**

Improving access to information for women farmers



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Introduction



About the guidebook

This guidebook is produced by PRISMA, a partnership between the Governments of Indonesia and Australia to grow agriculture markets to benefit smallholder farmers.



Why

This guidebook aims to support marketing teams, field staff of companies, and government extension workers in their efforts to reach out to women farmers more effectively. Women are often overlooked and men are made the primary point of contact, but women could potentially play crucial roles within farming households. Therefore, the information provided will be more beneficial if it is delivered to those who have a role.



Whom this guidebook is intended for

The marketing team of agricultural companies, government extension officers, or other parties who wish to convey information, market products/services, or organise socialisation events for farmers.

Making access to information more inclusive for women



Access

Make sure women know about the event and have access to information



What to consider when creating an event for women:



The invitation



Location and safety



Time



Purpose/incentive



Form/type of event and the objective





Participation (event)


Create an environment where women can fully participate



How to encourage participation:

-  Does the speaker address them in the talking point?

-  Does the session/the speaker encourage them to ask and comment in a fair time allocation?

-  Are the participants comfortable with the event's environment (including male counterparts' presence)?





Information

Share information that women can benefit from



What to consider for content:

-  Does the speaker ensure that women participants understand the information?

-  Role and decision-making power: Can women use the information in their household? (or is it out of their control?)



Chapter 1

Tips for group meetings



Problems and issues with women's access and participation in group meetings



Problems in access

In rural areas there is a common misconception that only men are needed at events as they are head of the household. Even when the organiser is intending for women to attend, the invitation is often addressed to the man. There is often an expectation in the household that the man should attend, even if it is the woman who could benefit the most from the event.



Problems in participation

Often women are tasked with helping to organise the event, either the meeting space and/or preparing the food. This prevents them from participating in the event. When women attend the event, the facilitators and trainers can be biased and direct the session and questions towards men.

When holding events, the aim is for women to not only be present but to be active participants at the event. This requires some thought before the event, to plan an event that women feel comfortable enough to share their experience, ask questions and learn.



In order to address these issues, it is essential to not only ensure that women are present at meetings but also that they actively participate in them.

Therefore, it is necessary to consider the design of activities not only when inviting participants but also the features within the event that can make women farmers feel comfortable.

Inclusive access

Providing information to women farmers through accessible activities



Invitation

Invitation through household:

- 1 Method 1** – Invite both women and men by addressing their respective names – either in the letter or verbally.
- 2 Method 2** – Invite women individually: Even if the invitation goes through men, make sure to tell him that it's intended for the women.

Reach & invite them through women's communities/groups

- 1 Method 1** – Invite the whole women's group.
- 2 Method 2** – Invite the key opinion leader in the group, so they can redistribute the information to the rest of women.



Additional tips

Women may prefer to attend information sessions with their partners, but if their partners cannot come, it may be necessary to invite them with women farmer groups or other women's groups.



Location

- 1 Not too far from where they stay to increase the probability of attendance.
- 2 Relatively safe to reach the location if they go alone.
- 3 Spacious enough to accommodate all invitees.
- 4 If it's far, consider the location reachable with public transportation.



Time

- 1 Consider women's and men's work time (on- and off-farm).



Purposes/incentive

- 1 Clear purposes and benefits specifically relevant to women, once they get the information from this event, should be stated in the invitation.
- 2 If necessary, consider providing souvenirs or vouchers relevant to women's interests.





Inclusive participation

Creating a safe space for women to speak

(especially relevant for mix-gender meeting/event; please kindly consider local context).



Creating a simple ground rule

- 1 Everyone, both women and men, has a fair chance to speak.
- 2 Everyone needs to listen to what everyone has to say.
- 3 Everyone needs to respect any questions and comments delivered.
- 4 No inappropriate jokes.



Reasons:

- Avoiding gender-bias comments from fellow participants, especially from different gender
- Avoiding certain groups (e.g., women) to feel intimidated or even underestimated to speak up, ask, and comment (context: where men dominate agricultural activities, hence they understand more)





Facilitating active participation

- 1 Recognition:** listen to everyone's contributions.
- 2 Facilitating the chance to speak:** encourage women to speak or provide a session for each different group to ask or comment.
- 3 Comfortable environment:** having a seating arrangement where women and men are separated.
- 4 Relatively balanced number of women and men participants.**



Reasons why the regulations above are necessary:

In rural areas, men tend to dominate activities in the agricultural sector, making them more experienced and active in discussions related to agriculture.

Facilitators need to actively address and involve women participants in discussions to ensure they have the opportunity to speak and ask questions, especially when they do not understand or simply want to share their experiences.





Inclusive participation through women-targeted meeting/event

What to do if women are still reluctant to participate in the discussion involving men and women?



Conducting events targeting women



What?

Events including meetings/activities targeting women where all participants are women (not mixed-gender).



Why?

- Because meetings like this can be more effective compared to meetings involving both men and women participants simultaneously, especially if we want to ensure that women are more active in discussions, both with participants and with facilitators (in terms of asking questions, confirming, and sharing experiences).
- This is typically done when there is a company or organisation with specific issues or products where women are believed to have a strong influence and involvement thus it is expected that women will gain a more comprehensive understanding through this meeting (for example, maize planting activities, feeding activities, rice planting activities are examples of cultivation activities dominated by women in certain areas).



While not all women participate actively in farming and/or animal rearing, many of them still influence their husbands in farming/rearing decisions.



How to conduct women-targeted events

- 1** For invitation, venue design and timing apply the same principles as "Inclusive Access" in the previous section.
- 2** Map out farming activities where women participation is relatively high.
- 3** Make sure the content conveyed predominantly covers those cultivation activities.
- 4** Invite women participants through approaches to women's groups who have interests/skills in farming/animal husbandry (for example, women farmers' groups) and those who do not (for example, savings groups, informal women's groups, church groups). If there are members of the group who are not involved in farming, the majority of them should come from HOUSEHOLDS engaged in agricultural cultivation/farming/animal husbandry with the commodities to be discussed in the events.
- 5** In providing information about products or specific issues, ensure that the content delivered is linked to topics that are often of interest to women. For example, how the content affects household finances or the health of household members.
- 6** Provide incentives that are aligned with women's interests (such as vouchers, souvenirs), so there's a greater likelihood of them spreading information to others.





Chapter 2

Tips for door-to-door or individual socialisation



Problems and issues with women's access and participation in door-to-door meeting



Women's unrecognised roles → lack of access

Agricultural field staff or agents who do not recognize to what extent women or men are involved in certain rearing activities might give information to men as the head of household or to any person that open the door for them.

This could result in the person who is most involved in the activity, not receiving the information they need



Not adjusting information → low quality of participation

- The lack of language or method adjustment in delivering information to women in rural areas can hinder them from fully understanding the information provided.
- Information delivery within certain cultural contexts without considering the dynamics between women and men within households can also further encourage discrimination against women. For instance, men continuously discuss women's experiences on behalf of women.





Inclusive access

Inclusive access for door-to-door socialisation



Meet the right person



Know the information that you are delivering

- Information related to what stages of cultivation activities will you provide?
-



Know your audience

- **Which household member** typically engages in activities related to the information you provided?
- Ensure that the recipient of the information is the one who will take the follow-up action.



Presence opens up opportunities for access



Make sure their presence

- Have you made sure before your arrival that the right audience, either women or men or both of them, will be there when you deliver the information?
- Have you tried to reach them so they can be present while you delivering the information?



Leave behind printed materials

- If they are unable to attend, try to prepare educational materials (booklets, leaflets, etc.) as a substitute for the information that will be conveyed to them.
- If they are unable to attend the meeting, ensure that educational materials will be provided to the right person.



Inclusive participation

Inclusive participation for door-to-door socialization

Understanding and experiences



Do they understand?

- Have you asked them whether there is anything that they still do not understand or they still want to know more?



Ask them further

- Even though farmers may have consulted and asked you questions regarding the information provided, make sure to ask them about their experiences and difficulties they have experienced so far.
- This is especially useful for female farmers who are usually more shy or whose cultivation experience is rarely explored by the majority of people/ organizations/companies.



Pay attention to the gender dynamic

- Be aware that in some cases women in the household do not feel comfortable or are not able to speak as much as men.
- If the men are the only ones speaking about their experiences, be proactive in engaging women about their own experiences.
- If men dominate the discussion, do not forget to ask women whether or not they understand or have any questions.



Follow-up after



Extend their access to information


- Leave your contact details and make sure you follow up on any requests or concerns anyone had with information they received.




If you would like more information or support to run an event for women please contact PRISMA at:

✉ info@aip-prisma.or.id



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