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"Towards multi-functional agro-ecosystems
promoting climate resilient futures"

Looking ahead – gender and inclusion in food, land and water systems in 2050

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Abstract

This presentation is part of a proposed hybrid panel session entitled "Gender equality and inclusion in food, land, and water systems by 2050: Projections and solutions" by the CGIAR Gender Equality and Inclusion Accelerator, co-organised by CGIAR Science Program on Multifunctional Landscapes. Foresight research has not fully explored gender equality as an outcome of food system change over time. Only marginal progress is being made to address gender inequalities in food systems in some areas, such as closing the gender digital divide. Moreover, intensifying climate change, proliferating conflicts, and declines in official development assistance, are eroding progress or even exacerbating inequalities. If women remain marginalised in food systems in terms of economic opportunities, participation in governance and decision-making, and capacity to adapt to change, achieving global development goals is unlikely. Addressing gender inequality is not only a moral imperative; it is also a catalyst for food system transformation. FAO (2023) estimates that closing gender gaps in farm productivity and wages would increase global GDP by 1 percent and reduce global food insecurity by 2 percentage points. Additional evidence shows that investing in women's empowerment can boost incomes, reduce poverty, and strengthen resilience.

This chapter extends existing analyses by projecting changes in gender equality and opportunities for youth in food system-based livelihoods under three alternative scenarios: an optimistic future, a pessimistic future, and business as usual. Each scenario draws on historical data over the past 20 years and assumes alternative futures based on climate change trends, demographic shifts, technological development, and economic growth. The model produces linear projections for indicators of gender equality and engagement in agrifood systems to 2050, disaggregated by region and, where possible, by age group. Given limited data availability for key issues that influence gender equality outcomes, we treat three areas as special cases: 1) access to and ownership of natural resources, 2) migration, and 3) digital inclusion. The results highlight key drivers of gender (in)equality and point to promising areas for intervention.

Keywords: Food systems, foresight, gender equality, youth

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