

# 4. Women's Triple Role: Productive, Reproductive and Community Work

## Objectives

- Define the three kinds of work referred to in GAD
- Link women's triple role to practical gender needs and strategic gender needs
- Examine how this division of labour interacts with community dynamics
- Prepare participants to use this new understanding to inform project identification, objectives and design in communities where they work

**(Estimated Session Time: 1 hour and 20 minutes)**

## Session Flow and Description

### **Introduction - 10 minutes**

- Share session objectives with participants.
- Ask participants to give their name and position and to share two types of work they perform on a daily basis outside the office.
- List these on a flip chart under "Men" and "Women".

### **Plenary Group Presentation - 20 minutes**

Handout 3.4a, The Three Types of Work Include characteristics and examples of:

- Productive work
- Reproductive work
- Community work

### **Discussion Question**

- Why is this distinction important for GAD?
- How does intentional focus on the three types of work lead to transformed gender relations?

*Present Activity 3.4a, Women's Triple Role and Practical and Strategic Gender Needs*

- Using an overhead transparency of this activity, analyse which roles and needs each job listed on the flip chart addresses.

### **Small Group Work - 20 minutes**

*Activity 3.4b, Gender Roles and Needs in Your Community*

- Give each group the blank matrix. Groups will define and categorise gender roles and needs, as well as types of work in their communities.
- Ask group members to work together on this matrix. If they are from several different communities, the list can be differentiated by community.

### **Plenary Group Debriefing - 20 minutes**

Importance of clear definitions in Gender Analysis and GAD

### **Discussion Questions**

- What issues arose when your group categorised specific roles and types of work? Was everyone always in agreement? Why or why not?
- What role do common definitions for these basic categories play in working on GAD?
- What is the value in these shared definitions and in recognising “what people mean” even if they do not use the same terms? Will community members always use these terms

when articulating what they do?

- Why is recognising all types of work important for GAD?

## **Individual Work - 5 minutes**

Create a worksheet for yourself that allows you to analyse types of work you do during the next week.

## **Post-Session Assignment: Becoming a Gender Equity Witness - 5 minutes**

- Use the worksheet you created in the training session and record all work you do during the next week.
- Identify your work as productive, reproductive, or community-based.
- Analyse your data at the end of the week.
- What percentage of your working time is spent in each category?
- Ask a member of the opposite gender in your household to do the same exercise. Discuss and analyse the results.

## **Materials**

Handouts and Activities

- Handout 3.4a, The Three Types of Work
- Activity 3.4a, Women's Triple Role and Practical and Strategic Gender Needs
- Activity 3.4b, Gender Roles and Needs in Your Community

## **Facilitator Preparation**

- Analyse your own time for 24 hours and determine which activities are productive, reproductive, and community management.
- Create the plenary presentation.
- Make a transparency of Activity 3.4a and copies of Handout 3.4a and Activity 3.4b.

- Have paper available for participants to create individual worksheets to analyse how they spend their time in the coming week.

# The Three Types of Work

## Productive Work

Productive work involves producing goods and services for consumption and trade (farming, fishing, employment and self-employment). When people are asked what they do, their response most often relates to productive work, especially work that is paid or which generates income. Both women and men can be involved in productive activities, but for the most part, functions and responsibilities will differ according to the gender division of labour.

Women's productive work is often less visible and less valued than men's.

## Reproductive Work

Reproductive work involves care and maintenance of the household and its members – including bearing and caring for children, food preparation, water and fuel collection, shopping, housekeeping, and family health care. Reproductive work is crucial to human survival, yet is seldom considered “real work”. In poor communities, reproductive work is for the most part manual – labour-intensive and time-consuming. It is almost always the responsibility of women and girls.

## Community Work

Community work involves the collective organisation of social events and services: ceremonies and celebrations, community improvement activities, participation in groups and organisations, local political activities, and so on. This type of work is seldom considered in economic analyses of communities. However, it involves considerable volunteer time and is important for the spiritual and cultural development of communities and as a vehicle for community organisation and self-determination. Both women and men engage in community activities, although a gender division of labour also prevails here.

Women, men, boys and girls are likely to be involved in all three areas of work. In many societies, however, women do almost all of the reproductive and much of the productive work. Any intervention in one area will affect the other areas. Women's workload can prevent them from participating in development projects. When they do participate, extra time spent farming, producing, training or meeting means less time for other tasks, such as childcare or food preparation.

## Women's Triple Role and Practical and Strategic Gender Needs

**Activity:** Go through the following chart and analyse as a group the roles and needs each intervention addresses. Mark whether the intervention addresses any of women's roles (reproductive, productive, community managing) or needs (practical gender needs or strategic gender needs). Each intervention may include one role or need, or all of them. Debate the answers and refer to the handout.

### Intervention

|  | P | R | CM | PG | SGN |
|--|---|---|----|----|-----|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment</li> </ul> <p><i>a) Skills training for women:</i><br/>           Making cakes for the family Making dresses for sale Carpentry</p>                      |   |   |    |    |     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Services</li> </ul> <p><i>a) A new creche/nursery:</i><br/>           In the community<br/>           In the mother's workplace In the father's workplace</p> |   |   |    |    |     |
| <p><i>b) Housing ownership:</i><br/>           In the man's name<br/>           In the woman's name</p>  |   |   |    |    |     |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| c) Health clinic in a community where women work during the day:<br>Open in the morning<br>Open in the afternoon/evening |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

**P=productive CM=community managing PGN=practical gender need R=reproductive SGN=strategic gender need**

## Gender Roles and Needs in Your Community

This activity asks you to list specific roles and needs of women and girls in your community. This intentional focus is important as we are examining roles that have been invisible or unexamined for a long time. Understanding their roles will facilitate discussion and changed behaviours that can lead to transformed gender relations.

### Consider these examples:

Women's productive roles in your community may include raising vegetables to sell for profit. If project strategies to aid women include agricultural training or the building of market stalls, keep in mind ways to reduce the already heavy burden of the women's workload.

Practical gender needs may include a need for a water source closer to the village. Project strategies to address this need might include a new well.

The last row asks you to think about strategies that address both practical and strategic needs. An example might include creation of a health clinic and training of women as nurses, which would meet both a practical need for health care and a strategic need for education and employment opportunities. The project column may include past, present or future ideas.

| Gender roles and needs | Gender roles and needs in your community | Project strategies to address these roles and needs |
|------------------------|--|---|
|------------------------|--|---|

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Productive</b>                           |  |  |
| <b>Reproductive</b>                         |  |  |
| <b>Community Managing</b>                   |  |  |
| <b>Practical Gender Needs</b>               |  |  |
| <b>Strategic Gender Needs</b>               |  |  |
| <b>Practical and Strategic Gender Needs</b> |  |  |

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