

Chapter 8

Challenges and perspectives

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Introduction

Women have a fundamental role in maintaining life and productive activities that promote social equality, environmental justice and sustainable development. Among the challenges faced by them are the invisibility of their work, violence and discrimination in the countryside and institutions, the restriction of access to land and credit, and the difficulty of accessing public policies.

There are numerous initiatives of the Brazilian government to promote gender equality and women's autonomy, culminating in various public policies. However, the cultural and paradigm shift needed to value, recognize and empower women in the countryside, in forests and in cities, requires that these policies be transformed into state policies, so that they continue regardless of those in power.

One issue that deserves to be highlighted in relation to public policies is that often the insertion of this theme occurs in the logic of transversality. This logic allows women to permeate all spheres and initiatives, but in many cases what happens is the inexistence of specific actions that value their protagonism. Thus, it is essential to implement specific public policies, programs and projects for women, which can effectively guarantee their participation in decision-making, strengthening their autonomy and their insertion in productive activities.

Challenges

The feminization of the countryside in Latin America and the Caribbean, as reported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2012), and the increasing importance of rural women's segments for sustainable development indicate the urgency in the preparation of the staff of the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa) to act in this new reality. Although there are some research experiences directly with women, recognizing and valuing

their knowledge and their role in productive activities, most of the time women benefit only indirectly. Therefore, institutional strategies that promote research, development and innovation with and for women are necessary, involving the inclusion of this theme in its Master Plan and in other guidance documents.

In order for the gender approach to be incorporated into the institution, it is also necessary to promote changes in the organizational culture. This is a challenge that will hardly be overcome without the involvement of the communication and people management sectors. Awareness strategies and continuous training of Embrapa's professionals in this area will allow them to incorporate this approach in their projects and their actions. These awareness and/or training actions should address the concepts, principles and guidelines already consolidated internationally, in addition to presenting some methods and tools used in work with this specific audience. It is important to promote the exchange of experiences and reflection on the practice and role of women in research, development and innovation (RD&I) activities and productive activities. In this sense, involving the important partners conquered throughout Embrapa's trajectory is fundamental to the achievement of this type of strategy, as well as the integration of Embrapa into forums, networks and media that contemplate the theme.

The creation and structuring of permanent spaces for dialogue between the institution, rural women, their organizations and feminist movements is an essential initiative for the joint elaboration of strategies aimed at strengthening and broadening Embrapa's work with rural women. Creating lines of research on gender, feminist economics, autonomy and productive insertion of women in the public notices and stimulating the articulation of project arrangements focusing on the productive activities of rural women will allow the Embrapa to increase its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5).

Research and technology transfer actions should be designed with the objective of promoting the economic autonomy of women, as well as strengthening their organization and productive inclusion, giving visibility to the contribution of women to the generation of income of families. To insert this approach in the projects, it is necessary that rural women (indigenous, *quilombolas*, extractivists, farmers, settlers, among others) and their organizations participate effectively in the construction of these projects, so that their demands can be addressed. They also need to be involved in their implementation so that they can contribute to the construction of knowledge and technologies suited to their realities.

Perspectives

In relation to communication actions, the challenge is to give visibility to projects developed with rural women and also those in which female researchers are protagonists. In this case, it is suggested the institutional elaboration of a Guide to Sources with a gender/ethnic cut that can facilitate the diversification of sources to be indicated to the media. The joint effort with the RD&I area can result in facilitating the search for projects aimed at the rural and forest women. To do so, it is necessary to encourage male and female researchers so that project titles or keywords show that activities that directly benefit women or surveys of women's performance are being carried out in their projects, when appropriate.

At the same time, it is necessary to create and/or strengthen the mechanisms to measure aspects related to the opportunities offered to women and men within Embrapa. To ensure a good management of gender equality, opportunities for training, job placement leadership and management, and academic production, among others, should be used to mediate and disseminate progress towards achieving gender equality.

The creation and implementation of various government policies and programs have made many advances in achieving the economic and social autonomy of women. However, there is a need to ensure support budgeting for strategies to maintain, strengthen and complement these initiatives in order to overcome gender inequality and ensure the effective participation of women in the economy and sustainable rural development. Embrapa has a fundamental role in the implementation of these policies, carrying out actions that contribute to the appreciation, recognition and strengthening of the role of women in agricultural production activities.

Reference

FAO. **Aumenta el porcentaje de mujeres a cargo de explotaciones agropecuarias en América Latina y el Caribe**. 2012. (Nota de política sobre las mujeres rurales, 1). Available at: <<http://www.fao.org/3/a-as107s.pdf>>. Accessed on: Feb. 2, 2018.