



Gender-responsive approaches for training Veterinary Paraprofessionals in Nigeria, Uganda and South Africa

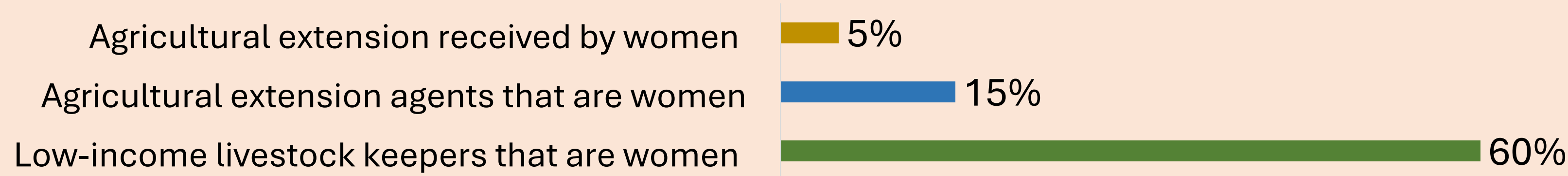
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Emma Alegi (FAO), Emma.Alegi@fao.org, Gani Enahoro (FAO), Grace Nakityo (FAO), Holly Hufnagel (FAO), Jacoray Lesiba Khunou (FAO), Jenny Maud (FAO), Johan Oosthuizen (FAO), Nafinatu Hyeini Abdullahi (FAO), Nokulunga Xaba (FAO), Rosie Herrington (FAO), Shehu Shamsudeen (FAO), Sylvia Baluka (FAO), Zelalem Tadesse (FAO).

Introduction

Women make up two-thirds of the world's 600 million low-income livestock keepers, yet only 5% receive support from agricultural extension services. Despite women's central role in day-to-day animal care, men are more likely to be prioritized by animal health services and have better access to information to implement best practices. Neglecting women's contributions to animal healthcare not only limits their potential as key change-makers but also misses opportunities to solve persistent healthcare challenges at the farm level.



Source: CGIAR, 2010; UNDP, 2012; USAID 2010.

Methodology

FAO conducted an animal health service needs assessment at both farmer and veterinary paraprofessional (VPP) level in Nigeria, Uganda and South Africa. The study employed a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approach utilizing qualitative and quantitative methods with a meticulous disaggregation of results by gender.

A total of 391 farmers and 247 VPPs participated in focus group discussions and 450 VPPs were surveyed via telephone to gather data for the quantitative analysis. The findings of this study were used to develop a gender-responsive training model ensuring:

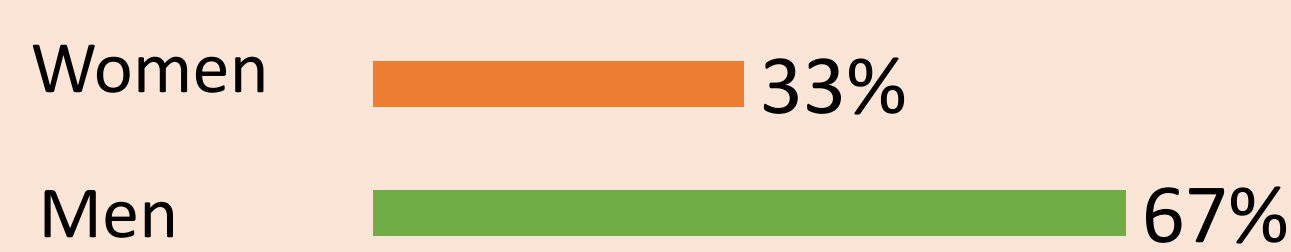
- training content was designed to meet women farmers' needs and improve VPP outreach to women farmers
- challenges women VPPs face are addressed



Results of animal health needs assessment

Farm Level:

Women and men farmers' interaction with an animal health professional over the course of one year in South Africa:



Source: VPP project, South Africa, 2022

- Women and men perform distinct but complementary activities in the care of livestock and securing animal health. This is often structured by gender norms, religious affiliations and traditional roles.

VPP Level:

Lack of awareness among VPPs on how gender impacts animal health and veterinary service access.

Women VPPs are an important channel for reaching women farmers, however, they make up only a minority of the workforce. Women VPPs face additional challenges which may lead to them dropping out of the profession:

- negative biases about their competence
- less confident than male counterparts
- paid less than men for services
- challenges restraining large ruminants due to lack of handling facilities and little practice during initial training
- sexual harassment
- less access to mentorship

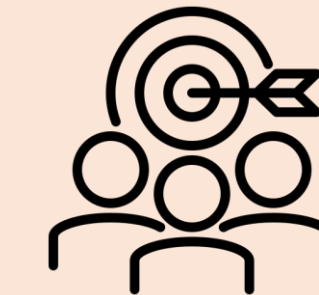
Cultural norms within certain communities create additional barriers, for example women not being able to enter Kraals (e.g. South Africa), or men not being allowed to interact directly with women, furthering the veterinary access gap (e.g. certain communities in northern Nigeria).

Gender-responsive VPP training model

- Topics which would improve women VPPs confidence have been integrated into VPP training program: communication skills, negotiating prices, strategies to de-escalate situations of harassment, handling large ruminants.
- Special consideration to facilitate women VPP participation in training: self-paced online learning (low-bandwidth and smartphone compatible), short workshop duration, childcare facilities on site.
- Specific training module on gender-responsive animal health service delivery has been developed focusing on:



"Target, Understand, Communicate" model



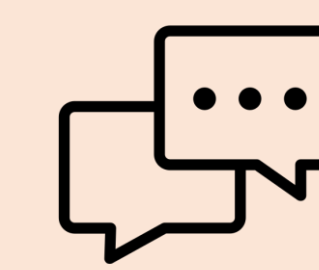
→ TARGET

Speak to all members involved in livestock keeping when taking a history



→ UNDERSTAND

- Who does what?
- Who decides what?
- Who needs to know what?



→ COMMUNICATE

- Gender-sensitive communication skills
- Adapt communication method to target group (literacy and knowledge level)

"The knowledge I acquired from this course, especially the module on gender-sensitivity have made me understand why sometimes I'm not successful in advising farmers on good husbandry and biosecurity because I used to neglect important members of the game. The knowledge from this course will help me reposition myself well for better a way of advising farmer families"

-Quote from VPP trainee



Male VPP in Uganda applying the "Target, Understand, Communicate" model during history taking on a family farm.

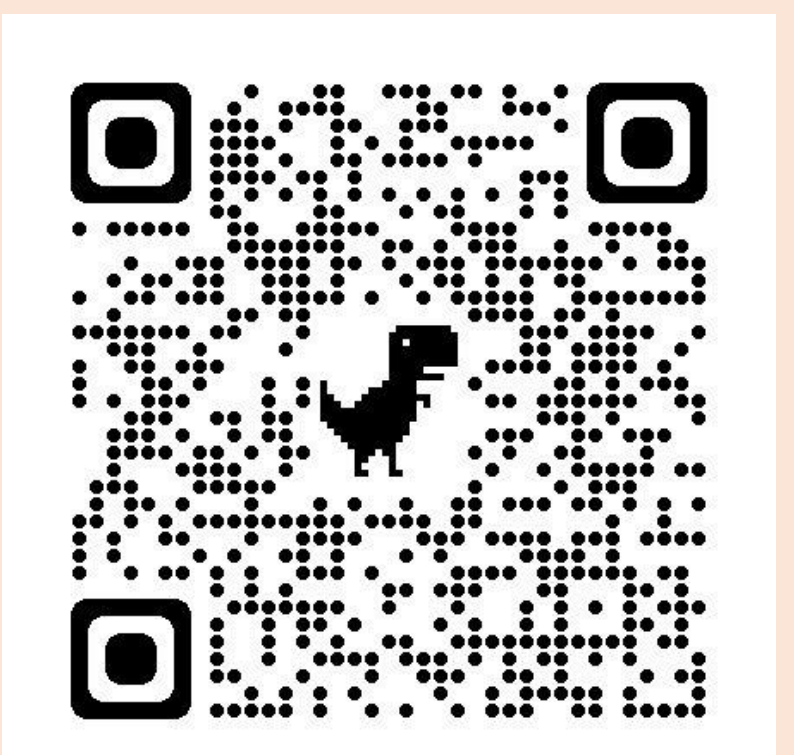
To date 880 VPPs have undertaken online training on gender-sensitive animal health service delivery, and 305 have completed face to face training on this topic.

Conclusions and recommendations

- The collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data from the needs assessment provided essential insights into the specific concerns, needs, and priorities of both women and men VPPs.
- This context-specific information facilitated the development of a gender-responsive training approach tailored to the realities on the ground for women and men VPPs and livestock keepers in Nigeria, Uganda, and South Africa.
- The high completion rates and positive feedback from both women and men VPPs validate the success of integrating gender considerations into continuing professional development training for frontline animal health service providers.
- These findings show that gender-responsive approaches are an effective strategy for enhancing the accessibility and relevance of veterinary education, promoting both the professional growth and empowerment of women VPPs, as well as improving service delivery outreach to women livestock keepers in the African context.

Further information

For further information on the project, please scan the below QR code.



World Organisation for Animal Health

Organisation mondiale de la santé animale

Organización Mundial de Sanidad Animal



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

