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**A Review of
"Women, Development, Equity and Efficiency:
In Pursuit of Constrained Bliss"**

by

**Kathleen Cloud
for the Winrock Colloquium**

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Women, Development, Equity and Efficiency:
In Pursuit of Constrained Bliss

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OVERVIEW

In this paper, Cloud quotes statistics which illustrate the positive changes in women's lives around the world. She then places these changes in the context of two other patterns of change: households' shift from resource-extensive investment in many children to resource-intensive investment in fewer children; and a shift from traditional to science-based agriculture. Cloud discusses the results of an AID-commissioned evaluation of project experience to test the argument that by delivering resources appropriately to both men and women, project performance would be improved.

Cloud acknowledges that leadership among donors to support women's rights within the development process has moved away from the United States. She proposes an agenda for the next administration to assure that the US continues to be a major actor in this effort.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PAPER

Cloud outlines several perspectives on the role of women as decision-makers and producers in rural households. She briefly touches upon the returns to women's labor, both as hired laborers and as unpaid family labor; and women's roles in agricultural management. In her view, despite increased understanding of the important responsibilities of women in rural households, this information is to a large extent ignored by the development assistance community.

For the evaluation of AID projects cited above, the "integration of women" into AID projects was defined as "the delivery of economically productive project resources to women as well as men in a manner that maximizes both equity and efficiency." The goal for AID then becomes

"the achievement of the highest and most equitably distributed productivity gains attainable with the available resources. This goal is indicated as the point of constrained bliss, which is the point of highest possible combined efficiency and equity on the project's production possibility frontier."

The study concluded that although gender analysis at the project planning stage is important to facilitate the flow of resources to women, it is also important to adapt resource delivery systems, institutional arrangements, and technical packages to suit women if they are to gain access to project resources.

Agenda for the Next Administration

1. Make gender equitable access to project resources a priority for the agency as a whole.
2. Systematic training of agency personnel to understand the issues and procedures
3. Clearly stated measures of success and accountability for their achievement, modeled on the Canadian strategy.
4. Regional bureaus and missions should employ personnel with expertise in these areas
5. Initiate research and policy consultation in crucial areas such as land issues, the magnitude and effects of rural women's informal sector participation, etc.
6. Link these efforts with those of other donors as well as those of host country institutions.

WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT, EQUITY AND EFFICIENCY:
IN PURSUIT OF CONSTRAINED BLISS

KATHLEEN CLOUD
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Data gathered for the UN Decade for Women have given us a striking picture of the rapid changes in the lives of women all over the world. Women today live longer, have fewer children, are more likely to be literate, to work outside the home, and to have political and legal rights than at any previous time in the world's history. According to UN and national data compiled by Sivard (1985):

-The average girl in the developing world will live 18 years longer than her mother.

-Women in every region of the world except Africa have begun to reduce their fertility. In India, for example, the fertility rate has dropped from 6.5 to 4.8 in less than twenty years, in Indonesia, from 5.5 to 4.3 in ten years.

-In low income countries, girls access to education lags behind boys, but is increasing more rapidly. For low income countries the percentage of eligible girls enrolled in primary school rose from 37 in 1960 to 64 in 1977. According to UNESCO, in 1984 82 percent of the world's boys and 71 of the girls of primary school age were

enrolled in school. At the secondary level, 45 percent of the world's students were female, at the third level; 43 percent, up from 32 percent in 1950.

-According to World Bank figures, the number of women in the paid labor force worldwide has nearly doubled since 1950; 46 percent of the world's women between the ages of 15-64 were in the paid labor force in 1985.

These changes in women's lives are occurring in interaction with other transformations in economic, social and political structures. Two other patterns of change seem particularly relevant to this discussion; the shift from resource-extensive to resource-intensive investments in the next generation, and a shift from traditional to science based agriculture.

Shifts in Investments in Human Capital

In traditional agricultural societies priority is given to bearing and raising as many children as possible, and to teaching them to perform the same roles as their fathers and mothers. Because infant and child mortality are high, resources of food, health care, parental attention, and education are spread among many children, not all of whom survive to adulthood. During structural transformation, as infant mortality drops, and education becomes an important mechanism for preparing children to live in a world different than that of their parents, households shift to more resource intensive investments in fewer children. It becomes possible to invest more health care, nutrition and education in each child. Such shifts occur first in the

cities, but in the developing countries, rural areas follow with increasing rapidity. This shift in fertility, nutrition, and education is now occurring in Asia and Latin America, but is just beginning in urban Africa.

In many systems, boys receive preference for schooling. Girls receive less, both because their labor is less easily replaced, and because the returns to the household are less obvious. Nevertheless, the proportion of rural girls receiving an education is steadily rising. As increasing numbers of farm children are sent to school, mothers spend more time and attention on interaction with young children, and often replace the labor of older children in the house and the fields. As their children mature, some are prepared for science based agriculture, other move on to business, government and industry.

Shift from Traditional to Science-based Agriculture

The shift from traditional to science based agriculture has been intensively studied, and is now reasonably well understood. Since many of the senior scholars in the field are in this room, I will not recapitulate these understandings, but rather comment on what has been, from the viewpoint of women, a serious omission. The process of structural transformation demands that farm households learn to choose and utilize effectively the new seeds, fertilizers, credit sources, land and labor markets. A great deal of energy has been devoted to analysis of the factors influencing the decision of these households, but gender roles and responsibilities have been ignored as variables. As a result, our understanding of many of these systems has been seriously distorted.

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Yet there is a separate stream of research that has produced a deepening understanding of farm women's roles not only as mothers and housekeepers, but as agricultural producers. The earliest literature emphasized women's roles as agricultural laborers, establishing that they were significantly involved as both unpaid family labor, and hired labor.(Dixon, 1982) Much of this literature focused on the effects of new agricultural technology on the demand for women's labor. This in turn led to an examination of the returns to women's labor. For unpaid family labor, technologies such as wells and grinding mills which lift the burden of work are undoubtedly helpful, but technologies which reduce or eliminate women's access to paid labor can threaten the livelihood of poor households.

The question of returns to women's labor also highlights questions about the returns to unpaid family labor. If wives are simply laborers, then they are working essentially for room and board. But if they are part of management, then their labor investments entitle them to a degree of control over assets, and a share in decision making. If women are conceptualized simply as workers, they have little claim on government resources such as extension, credit, and improved inputs, but if they are seen as managers or co-managers of agricultural enterprises, their claims on these resources are strengthened. This insight has led to efforts to clarify women's roles in agricultural management.

Where women head households due to death, divorce or desertion, their roles in management are clear. There are also large numbers of women with substantial management responsibility because of male out-migration. Husbands may work off-farm by the day, the week, the season, or for years at

a time. In particular, migration to the Gulf States during the past decade has greatly increased women's management responsibilities in many sending countries.

There are also large numbers of households where women are co-managers of farms with pooled assets and expenditures, with some division of roles and responsibilities and a degree of joint decision making. This pattern is particularly common in the United States, and much of Asia, although the reality is often imperfectly reflected in legal practice and government programs. There is increasing pressure in many countries for co-registration of land title and other capital assets. Such co-registration is growing in the United States, and a number of governments in the developing world are committed to this practice in assigning title for newly irrigated and/or newly settled land. Such co-registration influences women's access to credit and extension as well as land, by clarifying their relationship to the means of production.

There is another farm management model; that of the farm household as a mini-conglomerate, an umbrella for a number of small firms with separate capital and labor streams. The presence of this pattern is most marked in Africa, but is found, often in combination with co-management, in many parts of the world. In such systems, women and men are responsible for separate on-farm and off-farm enterprises. In some African systems, women are responsible for most subsistence production, while men specialize in cash crops. In other systems, men and women may specialize in different crops: men in cattle, wheat, hybrid maize, cocoa, or oil palm; women in tubers, legumes, swamp rice, goats, poultry, vegetables, fruits, or dairy products. Both men and

women are also often active in the informal sector, processing and then selling agricultural products such as beer, baskets and foods, providing services such as midwifery, healing, laundry, and tailoring, and trading in local and regional markets. In many of these small enterprises, the assets and expenditures are unpooled, although the profits may be used to promote household welfare. For such mini-conglomerates, it makes sense to deliver resources to the actual entrepreneur, and it is here that women's case for access to agricultural resources is strongest.

Yet to a large extent the development assistance community has ignored the increasing knowledge of rural women's agricultural responsibilities. Both scholars and donor agencies have assumed it away: assumed that farm women are always and everywhere consuming dependents, or at best, housewives exclusively involved in household production. Reflecting these assumptions they have assisted national governments in building institutions which extend improved technologies, credit and knowledge only to male farmers. Because these institutions do not adequately address the reality of the systems they are intended to serve, they interfere with the efficiency, as well as the equity of development efforts.

Gradually, donors are beginning to acknowledge this, and to attend to the efficiency arguments for increasing the flow of resources to women. In 1982 USAID issued a Women in Development Policy Paper which emphasized efficiency considerations, arguing that by delivering resources appropriately to both men and women, project performance would be improved.

In 1985, the agency commissioned a major evaluation of AID's project experience to test this argument. The evaluation covered the first twelve years of AID's efforts to implement the congressional mandate on integration of women into development, and it was intended to synthesize the lessons learned during implementation as well to test the equity and efficiency of agency efforts. AID's automated data base of more than 4000 projects was searched for all projects which mentioned women, gender, or equivalent descriptors. From this process 416 projects emerged, and a random sample of 98 projects was selected. 43 were agricultural projects, the others were in education, energy, credit/income generation, and water/sanitation. 82 percent were large integrated projects, the rest were smaller women's projects, or women's components of larger projects. Sectoral experts completed desk reviews of all 98 projects, examining the complete paper trail for each project, using a common rating scale to examine relevant project characteristics. Following this review, ten on-site case studies of current projects were done; seven of the projects were within the random sample, three were added to address specific issues.

The evaluation team spent considerable time in clarifying definitions; what was really meant by "the integration of women" into AID projects? The operational definition agreed upon for the evaluation was the delivery of economically productive project resources to women as well as men in a manner that maximizes both equity and efficiency. The objective in implementing AID's women-in-development policy then becomes the achievement of the highest and most equitably distributed productivity gains attainable with the available resources. This goal is indicated as the point of

constrained bliss, which is the point of highest possible combined efficiency and equity on the project's production possibility frontier.

The evaluation then centered on three questions:

1. Did women receive project resources in proportions that maximized both equity and efficiency?
2. What is the relationship between women's access to project resources and the achievement of project goals?
3. What factors in project design and implementation influenced the flow of resources to women?

There were sectoral differences in the answer to the first question. In some education and credit programs there was an approach to constrained bliss, but in agriculture, with very few exceptions, the projects weren't even close. There were systematic gender distortions in project resource flows; women received lower levels of resources, and received them in fewer projects. Women were noted as active agricultural producers in 38 of the 43 agricultural project documents, yet women were receiving less, much less of everything. Adding insult to injury, men rather than women were receiving credit and production packages for traditionally female managed crops such as poultry, groundnuts, sheep and goats.

For a tabulation of the resource flows in the 22 agricultural projects from West and North Africa and Asia see Table 1. In this sample, training was the

resource most often targeted to women. Several projects targeted more than one kind; in 4, training was targeted to women's household and human capital roles, in 6 to their agricultural roles, in 3, to income-generation in the informal sector. In no case did women receive inappropriate training, but they could have used a great deal more than they received. This was true at the level of the farm household, where women needed information on poultry care, improved seed varieties, and a range of production and management information. It was also true at the institutional level, where women received proportionately much less in-country and out-of-country training than men in the same institutions.

The same pattern is evident for technical assistance, with less information flowing to both farm women and professional women. A particular problem was that most projects did not assign technical assistance responsibility for assuring that women received resources. When they did provide for paid technical assistance in this area, there was a consistent tendency to hire expatriate personnel locally on a part time basis. As a result, the technical assistance on women and development was given by the one person on the team who had no institutional support, no ability to draw upon the accumulated experience of the field, and no opportunity to contribute feedback on the lessons learned back into the larger development community. This lack of institutional support for technical assistance on women seriously constrained the efficiency of the resources that were deployed.

Technology flows were also constrained. In 3 out of the 5 projects in this sample, the technology delivered was primarily for household rather than agricultural production. Most limited of all was women's access to the

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project's agricultural credit. As some measure of differences in resource levels, in the Niamey Production II. which was probably the most equitably designed and implemented of the projects in this sample, women were targeted to receive US\$ 50,000 in agricultural credit, men, US\$ 12,000,000.

Even the lesser amounts of resources women received did have an effect on the achievement of project goals. Across all sectors, there was a strong statistical correlation ($<.0001$) between women's access to resources (benefits to women) and success in achieving project objectives. (Table 2) For agriculture, the correlation was also very strong. ($<.001$ -Table 3). Casualty runs in both directions. Efficiently designed and managed projects are better able to deliver resources to women, and projects that deliver resources to women are generally more successful projects.

The clearest finding about the factors influencing the flow of resources to women was that gender analysis of the targeted system is important in project planning, but this analysis must be accompanied by gender adaptation of delivery systems, institutional arrangements and technical packages if women are to gain access to project resources. Among the elements that may need to be adapted are the requirements for access to resources such as credit, technology and training, the location and timing of service delivery, the gender composition, training and incentive structures for staff and beneficiaries.

AN AGENDA FOR THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION

Given the difficulty involved, is it worthwhile to try to deliver agricultural resources to women? There are compelling reasons for doing so. The evaluation demonstrated that ignoring women's agricultural roles leads not only to inequity, but to inefficiency, because of the importance of women's management and labor in targeted activities. Increasing women's access to agricultural resources is also an effective way to increase the income of rural families. The research literature is increasingly clear on the connections between women's income, their fertility and the educational and nutritional status of their children. These, in turn, are directly connected to the larger goals of development, to improving the life chances of people.

Finally, and most importantly, during the last decade an international consensus has emerged that operationalizing full adult status for women is a major goal of development. Ninety-seven countries have now ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which in Article 14 (rural women), states the "right to access to credit, loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology, and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform and resettlement, and the "right to participate in development planning and implementation."

Several donors, including Canada, the Nordic Countries, IFAD and UNDP have begun to move aggressively to implement these rights, and a number of national governments are also moving decisively in this area. Leadership in this area has moved away from the United States, and if we are to

participate meaningfully in this on-going process, a recommitment of leadership and resources will be necessary.

In concrete terms, what should be done by the next administration to assure that the United States is a major actor in this effort?

First and most importantly, the administrator should make gender equitable access to project resources a clear priority for the agency as a whole. To be effective, the policy statement must be accompanied by systematic training of agency personnel to understand the issues and procedures. There must also be clearly stated measures of success and accountability for their achievement. This strategy has been successfully employed by the Canadians, and is now being adopted by other donor agencies. Such efforts provide a reservoir of experience that AID can draw upon.

Both the agency as a whole, and each of the regional bureaus should establish priority areas for attention during project design and implementation, based on an understanding of what is both important and technically feasible. Some obvious areas for immediate attention include improving women's access to agricultural credit, and to appropriate technical packages. The number of professional women receiving third world country training could, and should be increased substantially. Immediate attention should also be given to addressing some of our past mistakes in institution building; to strengthening the faculties of schools of home economics and building their capabilities to address women's agricultural roles, as well as strengthening substantive attention to gender roles in agricultural colleges, research and extension systems. Attention to gender

issues in institution building is particularly urgent in Africa, where women bear so much responsibility with so few resources.

Regional bureaus and missions should be given the resources to employ agency personnel and technical consultants with expertise in these areas, and a process should be instituted for tracking the progress of these interventions, and synthesizing the lessons learned as the effort goes forward.

At the same time, longer term research and policy consultation should be initiated in crucial areas which are not so well understood, or which do not admit of simple solutions. African women rights to land in intensifying agricultural systems is a particularly difficult issue which urgently needs research. Clarifying the relationships between rural women's work patterns, fertility rates and the education of their children is also important, as is a better understanding of the magnitude and effects of rural women's informal sector participation, and its effect on household income and expenditures. As work goes forward, other areas of fruitful investigation will also become apparent.

All these efforts, improved project design and implementation, institution building, research and training should be linked not only with the efforts of other donors, but with those of host country institutions. Many African agricultural ministries, such as those in Malawi, Zimbabwe and Kenya are actively grappling with the gender equity of their credit and extension systems, and we have much to learn from their experience. India has a number of institutions working with programs for women in the informal sector, and

governments all over the world are gaining experience with credit schemes for women.

One of the most radical transformations in history is occurring now all over the world; the transformation of women to fully functioning, legally adult members of society. It will continue whether the United States reaches out to understand and assist it, or ignores it completely. Yet we have a unique opportunity to aid in understanding the transformation as it occurs, and by understanding, to facilitate it. Such opportunities do not come often; we are fortunate to live at such a time. A little boldness in the pursuit of constrained bliss is now in order.

Table 1. Gender Access to Agricultural Project Resources

n: 22 Projects

	<u>Projects Targeting Resources</u>		<u>Projects Delivering Resources</u>	
<u>Training</u>	women 8	men 19	women 5	men 14
<u>Technology</u>	women 4	men 9	women 4	men 7
<u>Credit</u>	women 4	men 10	women 2	men 8
<u>Technical Assistance</u>	women 5	men 14	women 5	men 12
<u>Salaries from Project (Host Country Personnel)</u>	?	men 22	women 6	men 22

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Table 2. Benefits to Women as a Factor in Project Success
 All sectors (n=101 projects, 80 projects with
 information)

<u>Benefits to Women</u>	<u>Success in Achieving Project Objectives</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>High/Likely</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Low/Unlikely</u>	
High/Likely	20	2	2	24
Moderate/Mixed	10	6	1	17
Low/Unlikely	4	11	24	39
Total	34	19	27	80

Source: Carloni, A. Lessons Learned 1972-1985: The Importance of Gender in AID Projects. (p. 25). Draft, January 1985

Table 3. Benefits to Women as a Factor in Project Success
(Agricultural sector - n=43 projects, 38 with information)

<u>Benefits to Women</u>	<u>Success in Achieving Project Objectives</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>High/Likely</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Low/Unlikely</u>	
High/Likely	8	0	0	8
Moderate/Mixed	5	5	1	11
Low/Unlikely	2	8	9	19
Total	15	13	11	38

Source: Carloni, A. Lessons Learned 1972-1985: The Importance of Gender in AID Projects. (p. 33). Draft, January 1985

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