



photo: AusAID

# Gender Implications for One Health Approaches

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# Presentation Outline

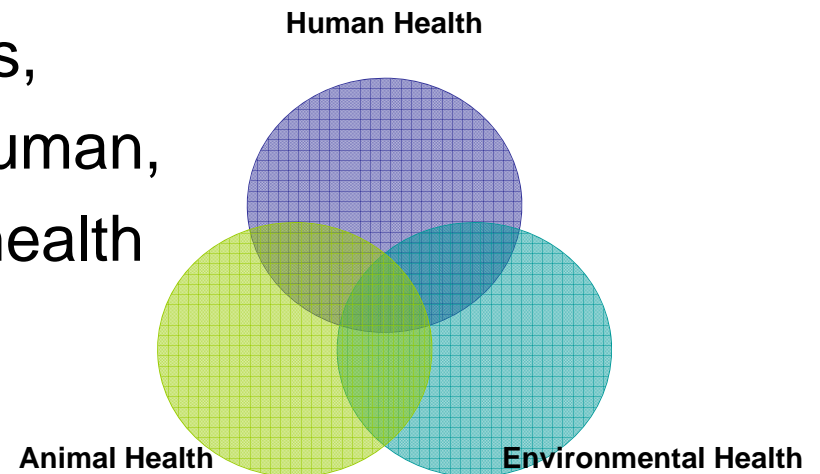
- Gender – what it's about and why it is important
- Gender considerations for endemic zoonotic and emerging infectious diseases
- Recommendations for One Health practitioners

# Gender Equality...

- Men and women have equal opportunities to:
  - realise individual potential,
  - contribute to economic and social development, and
  - benefit equally from participation in society
- Four key factors:
  - Access to economic resources
  - Participation and leadership in decision-making
  - Respect for the human rights of women
  - Increased capacity to tackle gender inequalities

# Why gender?

- Gender inequality restricts a country's economic potential
- Removing inequalities gives societies a better chance to develop
- For One Health approaches, addressing gender within human, animal and environmental health programmes will improve the effectiveness of development outcomes.



# EID policy and program development...

Consideration of both sex and gender for emerging infectious disease policy and program development is still the exception rather than the rule.



*Women planting rice in Cambodia.  
Photo: Kevin Evans*

# Sex and gender as health determinants...

- Sex – biological differences between males and females, and constant
- Gender – socially constructed and dynamic
  - Different roles for men and women
  - Gender relations between men and women
  - Different cultural and social norms
  - Different levels of access to and control over resources
  - Different needs

# MDG 3 (Gender Equality) - A development imperative...

*“I believe that investing in women and girls in itself constitutes a breakthrough strategy for achieving the MDGs, and that almost any investment we make in women and girls will have multiplier effects across the Goals”.*

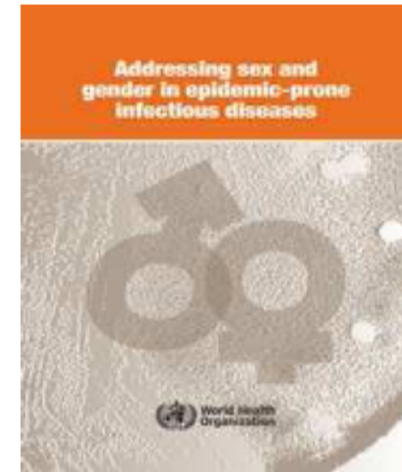
*Helen Clark, UNDP March 2010.*

- Gender equality is central to achieving the MDGs

# Influence and benefits...

- A greater understanding of sex and gender can influence the epidemiology of influenza and other emerging infectious diseases...

and will help to strengthen clinical, public health and government activities critical for prevention and control.



<http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/sexandgenderinfectiousdiseases/en/index.html>

# Biological differences...

- Differential impacts of infectious diseases for males and females may be due to complex biological factors such as anatomical and hormonal differences, and cellular differences at chromosomal levels.
- Differences also relate to life cycles – infancy, childhood, adulthood, pregnancy and old age.

*Rural health clinic nurse  
Solomon Islands.  
Photo: Peter Davis*



# Gender differences...

Influence:

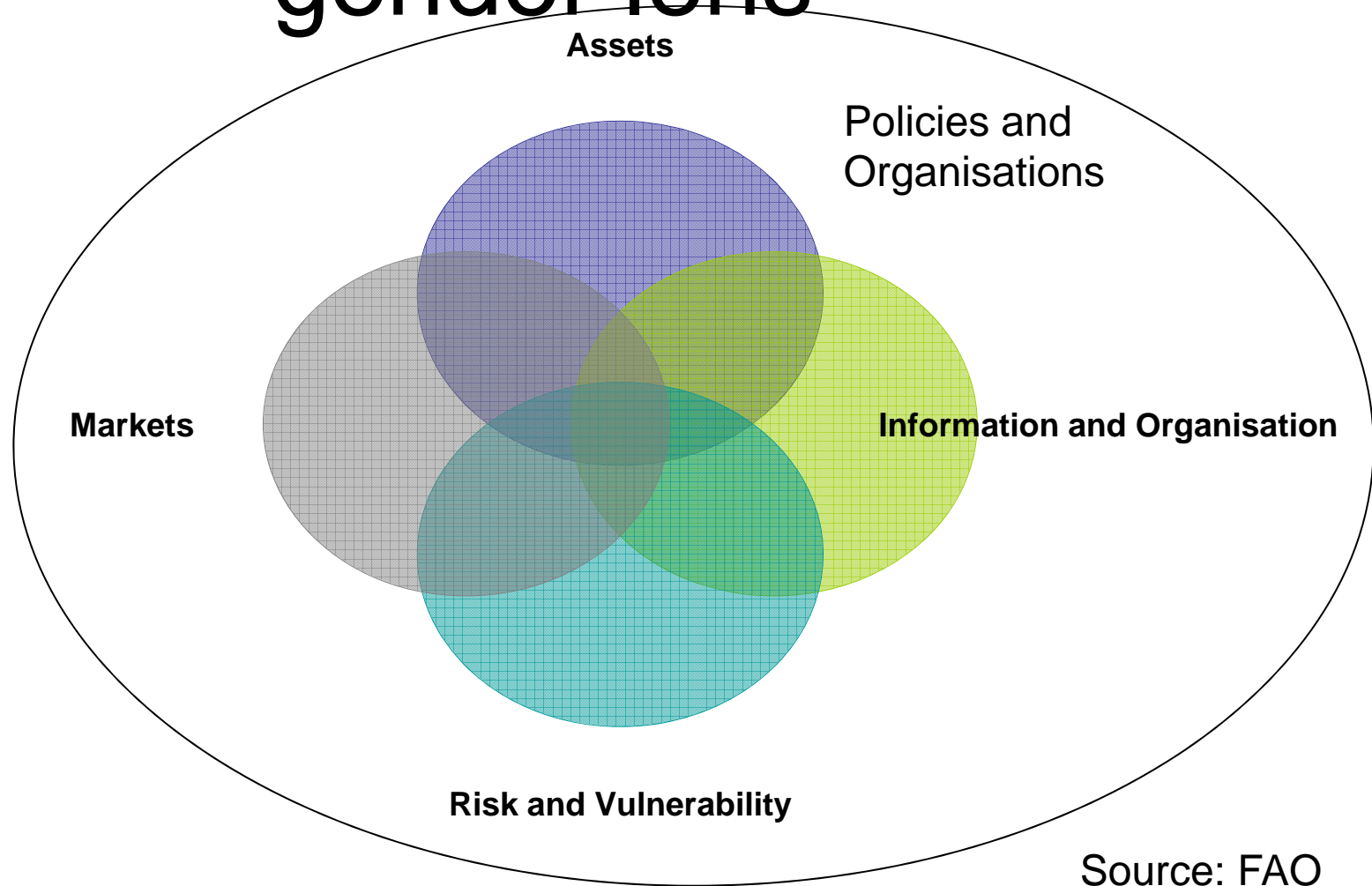
- Patterns of exposure to infectious agents,
- Access to health information,
- Health seeking behaviour, and
- The treatment of infectious disease.



For One Health approaches:

- Consider what men and women are doing in agriculture, fisheries and forestry, veterinary services, public health services, environmental and wildlife management
- Design One Health disease prevention and response policies and programs accordingly

# Sustainable livelihoods...with a gender lens



# Examples of gender-related differences that affect patterns of exposure and treatment...

1. Livestock management and animal husbandry roles
2. Domestic responsibilities
3. Women as caregivers
4. Time spent at home and away from home
5. Health care, education and information services

# Livestock management (1)

- Caring for livestock is usually gendered, with either men or women responsible for different animals depending on societal norms.



# Domestic roles (2)

- Domestic roles are often delegated to women and girls – this includes sanitation and cleaning duties, food preparation and rubbish removal.



# Women as Caregivers (3)

- Almost universally women are more likely to be responsible as caregivers for sick in both health care settings and at home within communities.
- Men, women, boys and girls have differential exposure to infectious agents – though this is dependent on the type of disease and context for transmission.



# Time at home and away (4)

- Men usually spend more time away from home than women and are more likely to be exposed to infectious disease agents away from home.
- Women and children are more likely to be exposed to infectious disease agents inside the home.



# Health care and education services (5)

- Access issues relating to social and cultural norms
- Health-seeking and behavioural differences between men and women
- Utilization of facilities
- Quality and type of care available for men and women



# Gender and One Health...

- Disease-specific impacts
- Sustainable agriculture
- Improved public health systems
- Improved research
- Legislative change
- Improved monitoring and evaluation systems

# Disease-specific impacts...

- Avian influenza
- Leptospirosis
- Also Dengue, TB, SARS, Pandemic H1N1
  
- Devise gender-sensitive responses for disease prevention and control based on dynamics of at risk groups/individuals.

# Sustainable Agriculture...

- Recognise both women's and men's roles in agriculture and food production
- Address obstacles for women's access to agricultural extension services
- Improve women's educational opportunities
- Support participation in agricultural learning through provision of sanitation and child care services, and funding
- Revise agricultural curricula to address women's roles and contributions to agriculture, including socio-economic and gender analysis training for all participants

# Improved public health systems...

- Health financing and resource allocation – improved by addressing health differences between men and women
- Health occupations – reduce inequities for women employees; support men with caring roles
- Leadership and governance – intersectoral action for gender equality

# Improved research...

- Research to understand gender implications for prevention of, and responses to, emerging infectious diseases.
- Examples:
  - SPC Gender and EID in the Pacific
  - ASEAN +3 EID Gender;  
Research on AI and Dengue;
  - EC Gender Study on AI.



# Legislative change...

- Strengthen legislation to address gender issues – national laws, policies and response plans can be revised accordingly
- For national emergency response plans – ensure that gender roles are taken into account

# Improved monitoring and evaluation...

- Establish gender and sex disaggregated data collection and reporting
- Establish gender sensitive indicators
- Ensure that gender differentials are an integral aspect of improved collaboration and information sharing between animal, human and environmental health sectors.

# 6 Key messages...

1. We need more systematic evidence on sex and gender differences
2. Through One Health approaches there is an opportunity to address gender differentials in animal, human and environmental health sectors
3. Gender is a fundamental contributor to achievement of all MDGs

# 6 Key Messages ...

4. Targeting gender reduces risks - the ways in which gender (and sex) affects outbreaks of epidemic prone diseases are complex and disease specific
5. Gender analysis improves targeting of resources and the effectiveness of prevention and control for epidemic-prone diseases
6. Monitoring and evaluation of One Health approaches needs to incorporate sex-disaggregated data



...and a final message:  
**Mainstream gender in  
One Health approaches**  
for effective responses  
to emerging infectious diseases!



Thank You!