

The Family Life Model

A guide to implementation

gorta
Self Help Africa





Elizabeth and Showthem Sikombe with grandchildren Wigan, Vista, Suqi, Esnarit and Maybean, Nsunda Viallge, Zambia.

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INTRODUCTION

In GSHA's experience in order for agricultural programmes to be more effective they must integrate gender. When programmes fail to consider gender differences women are often left behind. Activities that promote family discussion and mutual understanding of issues such as gender roles and responsibilities and unequal workloads are important for raising awareness, informing programming and ultimately addressing gender inequality. The Family Life Model (FLM) as discussed below is an approach that can assist GSHA overcome various kinds of gender inequalities as we improve the status of women and girls within the household and at community level.

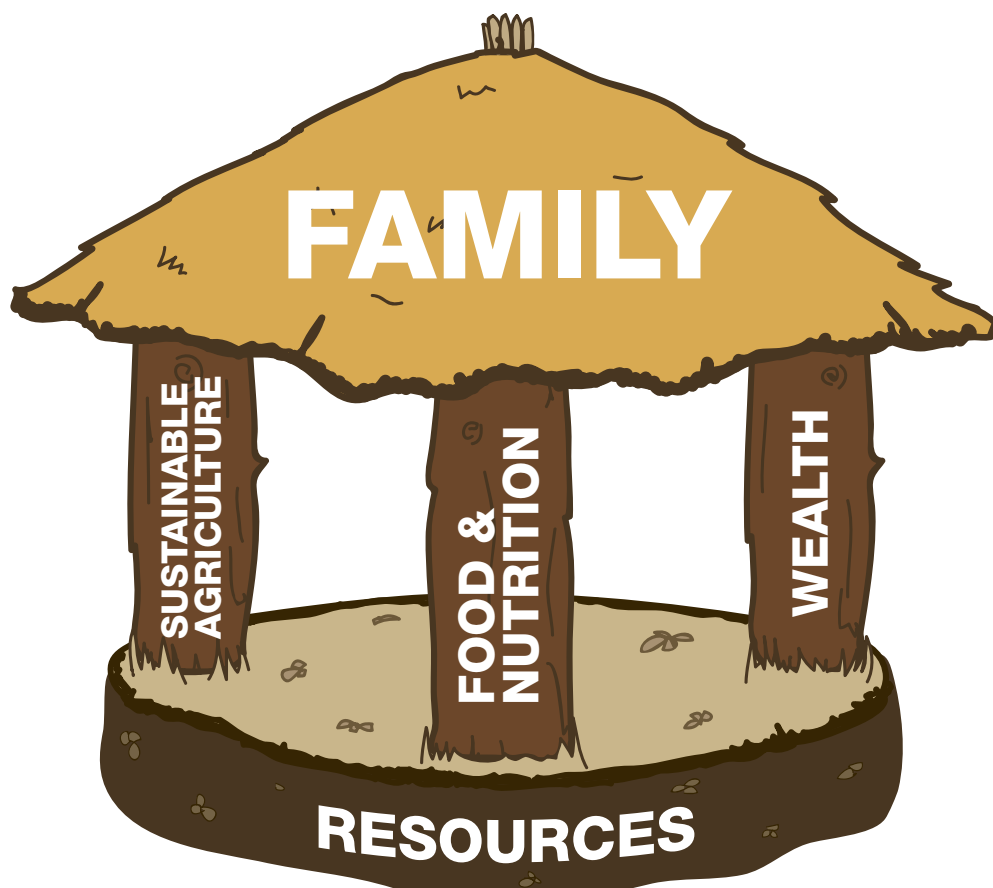
1. CONCEPTS

1.1. Family Life Model (FLM)

The Family Life Model is a localized and integrated approach articulating the relationship between the family aspirations and the necessary resources to meet them.

The Family Life Model helps to sensitize and mobilize husbands to live equitably with their wives and to ensure that their boys and girls are given the same opportunities to develop their potential. It also aims to contribute to a higher level of women's and girls' participation in decision-making at both the household and community level. This model also helps to ensure greater family harmony in the household between all of its members, creating an environment where decisions are made jointly and there is equal control over available resources.

Gender relations of power and control are changed when men and women, boys and girls become models of gender equality, recognising that they should enjoy the same rights and opportunities. At its best the FLM aims to encourage the family to be an agent of change and transformation in the community and society by challenging traditional notions of gender roles and responsibilities. It strives to ensure that neither the man nor the woman, boy or girl exerts power over the other, but that they make decisions together and share resources and their benefits equally.



1.2. The three pillars of the Family Life Model

The FLM is articulated under three key pillars:

- Sustainable Agriculture
- Food and Nutrition
- Wealth (markets and enterprise)

The three pillars are embedded in the values of:

a) A cohesive/united family:

- The family is motivated to improve the lives of each member of the household.
- Family harmony: peace/harmony in the family and among family members and with their community.
- Fairness/equity among men and women, boys and girls – all helping one another.

b) The Family as a productive unit that tries to find resources to improve their status and meet their aspirations.

Necessary resources may include:

- Access to financial services like credit and savings
- Access to markets
- Connections to leadership to articulate their needs
- Access to extension services
- Access to knowledge and information

1.3. Why GSHA had adopted the Family Life Model (FLM)

- It aims at an “all inclusive” approach to finding solutions to family problems/stress and disharmony using the human development model.
- Considers what it means to belong to a family, different kinds of families, roles and responsibilities, stress management, GBV, social responsibility, work-family issues, parenting and gender relations within the context of the family setting.
- Considers the family as a small unit in the society and their interrelationships regarding issues of income generation, food/nutrition and overall well-being.
- FLM is based on the pretext that the life skills and knowledge needed for a happy functioning human being are positive self-esteem, self worth and good relationships with other people.
- Recognises that good food/nutrition, income and resources are the cornerstone for development and realizing one’s full potential.

The expected changes relating to work and decision-making that happen after the introduction of the family life model.

- Household tasks are done, not according to your sex, but conducted in a family orientated manner
- Men, women and children make joint decisions about the family
- Women and girl’s have more opportunities to become involved in household decision making and community management and leadership
- Girl’s and boy’s work patterns change within the household with greater sharing of workload between the sexes.

What are the expected benefits that families experience after introducing the family life model?

- The burden of work for women and girl’s is reduced because men and boy’s are sharing tasks
- Women and girl’s self-esteem has increased because their roles are valued within the family and community
- Men and women experience a greater capacity to earn money because they have pooled their resources together and are sharing the workload.
- Peaceful co-existence – family tensions are reduced contributing to less violence in the household.



Ema and Lesho James with baby Raphic

2. DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS TOOLS

When starting a discussion on the FLM, it would be good to address the following points:

- Carefully explain the importance of the different components of the family life model and how they interconnect in order to contribute to overall family harmony
- Links to existing resources is vital to enable the family have food, income and good health

A number of tools are available which address the triple roles of women and girls, as explained here below.

Triple Roles of Women and Girls

The triple roles of women and girls highlights the heavy workload that they carry out in society. It is important to compare the different roles and responsibilities of both men and women, boys and girls in communities and households and facilitate a session by which families can share and discuss their different roles which as a result can contribute to more fairness and greater harmony within the family. The triple roles of women are:

- **Caring role-** involves caring for and maintaining the household and its members including bearing and caring for children, food preparation, water and fuel collection, shopping, housekeeping and family healthcare
- **Productive role-** involves producing goods and services e.g. in the agricultural and informal sectors
- **Community management role-** involves organising social events and services for the well-being of the community e.g. volunteering, participation in groups, ceremonies, celebrations and community improvement activities. In order to emphasise the difference in the workload undertaken by men and women, boys and girls a **Roles Identification Table** could be completed, which is a gender analysis tool. Participants should be divided into same-sex groups and asked to fill out the table according to their common experience, by ticking the relevant box. Both women and men will then come together and present their findings. This table will clearly highlight men and women's 'division of labour'.

Questions that can be asked by the facilitator/field officer?

1. Separately examine the tables for men and women, and then compare the following:
 - Who has reproductive roles?
 - Who has productive roles?
 - Who has community roles?
2. What are the commonalities and the differences between the men's and women's tables?
3. Is this situation fair to all members of the family?
4. What could be done to make the situation fairer or all members of the family?
7. Other context specific questions decided on by facilitator.

Roles Identification Table

Roles	Women	Girls	Men	Boys
Reproductive Roles				
Care and cleaning of the household				
Bearing children				
Caring for children				
Preparing food				
Heating water and bathing children				
Collecting water				
Collecting firewood				
Marketing				
Family health care				
Caring for the sick i.e. elderly				
Cleaning latrine				
Laundry				
Entertaining visitors				
Others (specify)				
Productive Roles				
Farming				
Planting				
Ploughing				
Weeding				
Harvesting				
Transporting to storage/barn				
Processing of crops				
Petty trading				
Charcoal burning				
Membership of savings and loans groups				
Making products for sale				
Providing services for sale				
Trading (buying and selling)				
Other (specify)				
Community Management Roles				
Ceremonies				
Social events				
Local politics				
Development work (environment, roads etc.)				
Taking care of the sick				
School management committee				
General membership of a village development committee				
Executive member of village development committee				
Others (specify)				



Bernard and Zedy Kemei with baby Faith, daughter Abigail and son Elisha, Bomet County, Kenya.

Access and control

The level of access and control obtained by women and men, boys and girls is an important component of evaluating the extent of gender inequality in communities.

Access is defined as the ability to use a resource, but not necessarily to have control over it.

Control is defined as having the ability to make independent decisions about the use of resources, including the decision to sell.

In order to show how household decisions are divided and how family assets are used by both men and women, a gender analysis tool known as the **Access and Control Profile** should be used. The access and control profile is divided into three categories- resources/assets, access and control. Both access and control are then further subdivided into male and female. Participants should be separated into same-sex groups, with the purpose of indicating who has control over each resource. In the situation where men and women both have access to and/or control over a certain resource/asset, a plus sign should be used to indicate who has more. Both men and women then come together and present on their results.

Access and Control Profile

	Access		Control	
Resource/Assets	Male	Female	Male	Female
Land				
Equipment (tractor, machines, ploughs)				
Tools and small farm implements				
Farming inputs (seed, fertilizer)				
Small livestock (goats, sheep, Pigs)				
Large livestock (cattle, oxen)				
Fowl (chicken, guinea fowl)				
Other animals (specify)				
Labour				
Cash				
Credit				
Savings				
Outside Sources of Income				
Financial Independence				
Education				
Primary Education				
Secondary Education				
Extension Services				
Appropriate Technologies				
Asset Ownership (machines, equipment, bicycle, radio, furnishings etc.)				
Ability/Freedom to pursue personal interests				
Leisure				

Questions that can be asked by the facilitator/field officer?

1. What resources do women have access to and control over which men do not?
2. What resources do men have access to and control over which women do not?
3. Do women and men have equal access and control over resources or does one group have an advantage over the other? Which group? Why?
4. Is this situation fair to members of the family?
5. What could be done to make the situation fairer for all members of the family?
6. Also analyse assets of boys and girls in the family, and who is advantaged.
7. Other context specific questions decided on by facilitator.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF A MODEL FAMILY

The term ‘model family’ is used to describe a home in which the family strives to provide quality basic needs such as health, education, wealth, food, nutrition, safe water and good sanitation equally to all family members. Other families noticing greater harmony and more development within the “model family” will be encouraged to adopt similar practices and change their behaviour to ensure greater equality and harmony within the home.

Features of a model family

Health

- Family members are able to access quality health services
- Pregnant mothers are able to get antenatal services and deliver at the health centre
- Children of age 5 and below accessing immunisation and child growth monitoring
- Ability to prevent family members from diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, diarrhoea
- All children aged 5 and below and pregnant mothers sleep under mosquito nets
- Husband and wife practice family planning

Wealth

- Having assets, resources and investments to provide and sustain for family needs
- Having the ability to utilise family resources properly and fairly
- Women and girl’s getting equal access and control over household assets and property
- Having family members (husband and wife, children, in-laws) make joint decisions by planning and working together
- Being able to save, invest and create assets
- Participating in social activities within the community

Education

- All school age children go to school
- Adult training and education opportunities at community level

Good hygiene, safe water and sanitation

- Having the ability to access safe water
- Boiling drinking water
- Keeping drinking water safe and covered
- Maintaining and using clean, ventilated pit latrine
- Practicing good food hygiene

Food and Nutrition

- Producing and accessing enough food for its members throughout the year
- Storing food safely for use
- Providing family members with food that is good for their health
- Allocating family labour and land for production of household food, especially for women’s and girl’s equal access and control
- Involving all family members in production of food for the family

Social Interaction and Integrity

- Ability to provide good shelter for the family
- Members of the family behaving with decency and respecting the social values of the society
- Members of the family can avoid violence (particularly domestic and sexual violence)
- Ability of the family members to avoid excessive alcohol so that it does not affect others in terms of violence, neglecting family responsibility and causing trouble to the community
- Family members involved in community activities
- Family members respecting the government and community laws

When it comes to eating healthy food

The whole family should have access to the right foods so that all members can be strong, healthy and active. The three different categories of food that need to be consumed include;

- **Energy giving foods** (Go food); This food category is responsible for giving family members energy, allowing them to go about their daily work, as well as their ability to move and think- examples include cassava, sweet potatoes, maize and Irish potatoes
- **Protective foods** (Glow food); Consumption of this food category will help shield bodies from disease and help them recover from illness- examples include vegetables and fruits
- **Body building foods** (Grow food); this food category helps to grow and repair people’s bodies- examples include groundnuts, beans, meat, milk and eggs.

Timothy Mtonga and wife Christine with grandchildren Memory, Agnes, Diless and baby Issac.



4. DEVELOPING A FAMILY ACTION PLAN

Action plans can be completed by families which will encourage families to set attainable goals in order to improve their household situation. The undertaking of action plans will provide a sense of direction and hope for families in the future. Formulating actions plans will help guarantee the sustainability of the Family Life Model approach benefitting the family as a whole into the future.

The family action plan, should also be used as a monitoring tool. This will allow for field officers to check and see whether the family is doing what they planned.

Family Action Plan

Example:

Man	Woman	Boys	Girls

Questions that can be asked by the facilitator/field officer?

1. The family action plan helped to plan how tasks can be shared among family members. What changes did you make from how the family used to share its tasks? What are the changes for the:
 - Man
 - Woman
 - Boys
 - Girls
2. When you discuss this plan with your children how do they think they will respond to their new tasks?
3. Is the Family Action Plan fair to all members of the family?
4. How do you think the Family Action Plan will change your family?

5. MORE DISCUSSION TOPICS

There are further questions and some answers which can be used by the facilitator/field officer in follow up sessions with beneficiaries.

Discussion Topic 1- sharing parenting roles and care for children

a) What does parenting and the care of children involve?

Parenting involves raising children together as a joint responsibility between mother and father. Raising children should include showing love and caring. It also includes ensuring that children enjoy their basic rights to health and education. Children also have the right to health and education. Children also have the right to express themselves and to be listened to.

b) Who does the parenting and care of children in most homes?

Women and older girls

c) What are the main questions we need to ask about whether that situation is fair to all members of the family?

- Are the women the only parents in the family?
- Do women need love and care from both parents? Why?
- If fathers are not taking an active role as parents, do they miss caring for their children?
- If fathers are not involved in parenting, what are the consequences?

d) What are the things that could be changed to make the situation fair?

- Men could share parenting with women
- They should have the experience of caring for and nurturing their children
- Men should allocate quality time for both boys and girls
- Both parents should have regular “family time”, sitting with their children together, telling stories and discussing plans
- Both parents should invest in children’s future. Men, as well as women, can pay school fees, buy uniforms and shoes

e) What new attitudes and behaviours do we want to see in a family?

- Men can play with their children
- Men should go with women when children need to be taken to the clinic. Or men can take children by

themselves

- Men should help children with their homework and keep up with their progress in school
- Men can also participate in children’s bathing and dressing when they are very young
- As children get older, men can discuss with children about life skills, hygiene and how to interact with other children and adults.

Discussion Topic 2- Sharing in control of resources and decision making

a) What is decision making?

Decision making is choosing something or taking an action among different options. It is making up your mind to do one thing or another.

b) How does decision making affect how resources are controlled in the household, and in business and farming?

The person who makes the decision is at an advantage. Everything is in favour of the person who takes the decision. If one person takes a decision and it’s the wrong one, all the family members will suffer. The person who takes the decision should be accountable to the others.

c) Who makes the major decisions in most homes?

- Men make decisions related to schooling, farming, business, use of household items (radio, motorbike, and bicycle), healthcare, inheritance etc.
- Men make major decisions because they have control of most things- they decide how and when things are used
- Women also take decisions, but they may not be major decisions. They can use things, but they cannot control the decision of how and when things are used.

d) What are the main questions we need to ask about whether that situation is fair to all members of the family?

- If the man makes all the major decisions, what happens to the wife and children? Are they consulted at all?
- Do most decisions promote the welfare of the family?
- What resources do women and children control?
-



Skovia and Gastone Ndisasirwa with daughter Prime, Ibanda District, Uganda.

e) What are the things that could be changed to make the situation fair?

- Man and woman should share in decision making collectively with children

All members of the family should make suggestions to inform the final decision

Encourage questions and feedback from everyone in the process of making a decision.

f) What new attitudes and behaviours do we want to see in a family?

- Men and women should both have control over resources, that is, they should both be able to make decisions about when and how resources should be used
- All family members should be able to talk freely without fear
- Everyone should be able to contribute ideas and get constructive feedback on them
- When a decision is made jointly, everyone should commit to it and do their best to play their part in carrying it out

Discussion Topic 3- Sharing Work in Farming and Business?

a) What tasks are involved in farming and business?

For farming:	For Business
Brushing Planting Weeding	Prepare market grounds Sell Products Banking

b) In most homes, what farming and business tasks do men do? Women? Boys? Girls?

Typically for farming activities, men and boys will do the brushing because it is considered to be the heaviest work. Women and girls will do the planting and weeding.

However, on women's land, women have to do all tasks, even brushing. Women have to help out on men's farms, but the men usually do not help out on women's farms.

For business activities, women and girls usually prepare the market ground and sell the products. However, when it is time to deal with the money, men take control.

c) What are the main questions we need to ask about whether that situation is fair to all members of the family?

- Why are some tasks performed more by men or more by women?
- Who does the greatest amount of work?
- Who does the heaviest work?
- Who benefits most from the work?
- What does this division of work mean for how we value the role of men and the role of women?

d) What are things that could be changed to make the situation fair?

- Men and women could share the work
- Men and women could work together
- Boys and girls could exchange tasks
- Hire more labour to take off some of the load
- Time- and labour saving devices could be introduced for women

e) What new attitudes and behaviours do we want to see in a family?

- Men and women collaborating in business activities
- Men and women planning expenditures, prioritizing and budgeting together
- Women participating with men in decisions about where to site a farm, what size it should be, and what crops to plant on it
- Men and women open joint bank accounts
- Men and women both join credit union to save money

Discussion Topic 4 - sharing community management and leadership positions

a) What are the community management and leadership positions?

Community management positions include leadership, but also involve volunteering to do unpaid work for a community project, such as building a clinic or fixing a road.

Men and women can be involved as leaders or members of many types of groups, examples of which follow:

For farming:	For Business
• Village Development Committee • Credit Union Board and Committees • Rural Commercial Women's Association • Occupations Association • Microfinance Solidarity Groups • Pump Management Committee • Community-led Total Sanitation • Hygiene Promotion • WATSAN Committee • STAR Circle • Community Cleaning	• Committee for Community Bye-Law Reform • Councillor • Ward Development Committee • Chiefdom Speaker • Women in Governance Network • Women's Leader • School Management Committee • Community –based Organisation • Organizing Funerals, Weddings, Naming Ceremonies

b) Who in the household takes on most community management and leadership positions?

Men mostly take on the decision- making positions in the community. They have more power and control over what decisions are made than women. Women are involved in community management, but take on more work and self-help activities, rather than decision-making roles.

c) What are the main questions we need to ask about whether that situation is fair to all members of the family and the community?

- Is the community using all its knowledge and skills by only having men as leaders?
- Who benefits more if only men are leaders?
- Do men always perform better than women in leadership roles?
- Don't women want to become leaders? Aren't they part of the community?
- Do women always accept leadership positions when they are offered them? Why or why not?

d) What are the things that could be changed to make the situation fairer?

- More women in leadership positions
- Quotas for committees and executive positions that ensure women's representation, i.e. 50% women
- More men and women supporting women in leadership positions
- More women speaking in meetings
- More support for women in leadership positions, such as training.

e) What new attitudes and behaviours do we want to see in a family?

- Girls in school
- Women having access to literacy classes
- Men and women deciding together how to contribute to their community
- Men and women sharing together the benefits of adopting the family life model
- Men supporting their wives to take on community leadership roles

CONCLUSIONS

The FLM is a tool for a gender transformative approach to development, which aims to enhance positive relationships within the family and greater harmony within the home resulting in an increased ability for the family to act as an agent of change within its community.

If development work is not engendered, it's endangered.

The model presents both opportunities and challenges as described in the table below.

FLM Opportunities:	FLM Challenges
- Families experience better health and well-being - Men and women share power and control - Men and women make joint decisions - Men and women jointly manage finances - Men and women jointly manage household resources - Team work in the family introduces more opportunities and benefits - Family members can talk freely with each other - Families enjoy love and harmony - Children have a better and more disciplined upbringing - Children have freedom to meet their potential - Improved communication in the home - Improved peace and stability in the home - Improved trust in the home - For those already sharing roles and responsibilities in their homes, the FLM legitimizes their efforts - Reduction in extra marital affairs which causes conflict in the home - The government is in favour of gender equality - Local NGOs support the idea of the FLM because they promote equity and inclusion - FLM training inspires all members of the family to get a better education - Gender-based violence is reduced - The FML has a positive effect on communities because people want to be models for the benefits.	- Most traditional beliefs, culture and religion dictate that women have less rights than men - Traditional authorities support male dominance - Too much pressure from extended family members to remain the same - Peer pressure - For many men, it is shameful to yield to their wife's decisions - Women are too submissive - Neither men or women have good skills in family management - Men and women lack the educational background and understanding to make changes - They are too used to practicing the same lifestyle for many years - Change depends on authority from the top and there is little support for the FLM - Few organizations are promoting FLM behaviours - There are not enough good women and men role models: - More chiefs are men - Often women chiefs only control women - In mosques, women still sit behind - More men magistrates than women - Chairmen and not chairwomen - Lack of satisfaction with the new situation

While many challenges remain, GSHA has a vision of change which is based on transformed gender relations and enhanced human dignity. We believe the FLM will help us achieve our vision and improve programme outcomes at all levels.



Father Haredin Mekina with daughter Munira and sons Abdishikur and Amrula Haredin, Kofele District, Ethiopia,