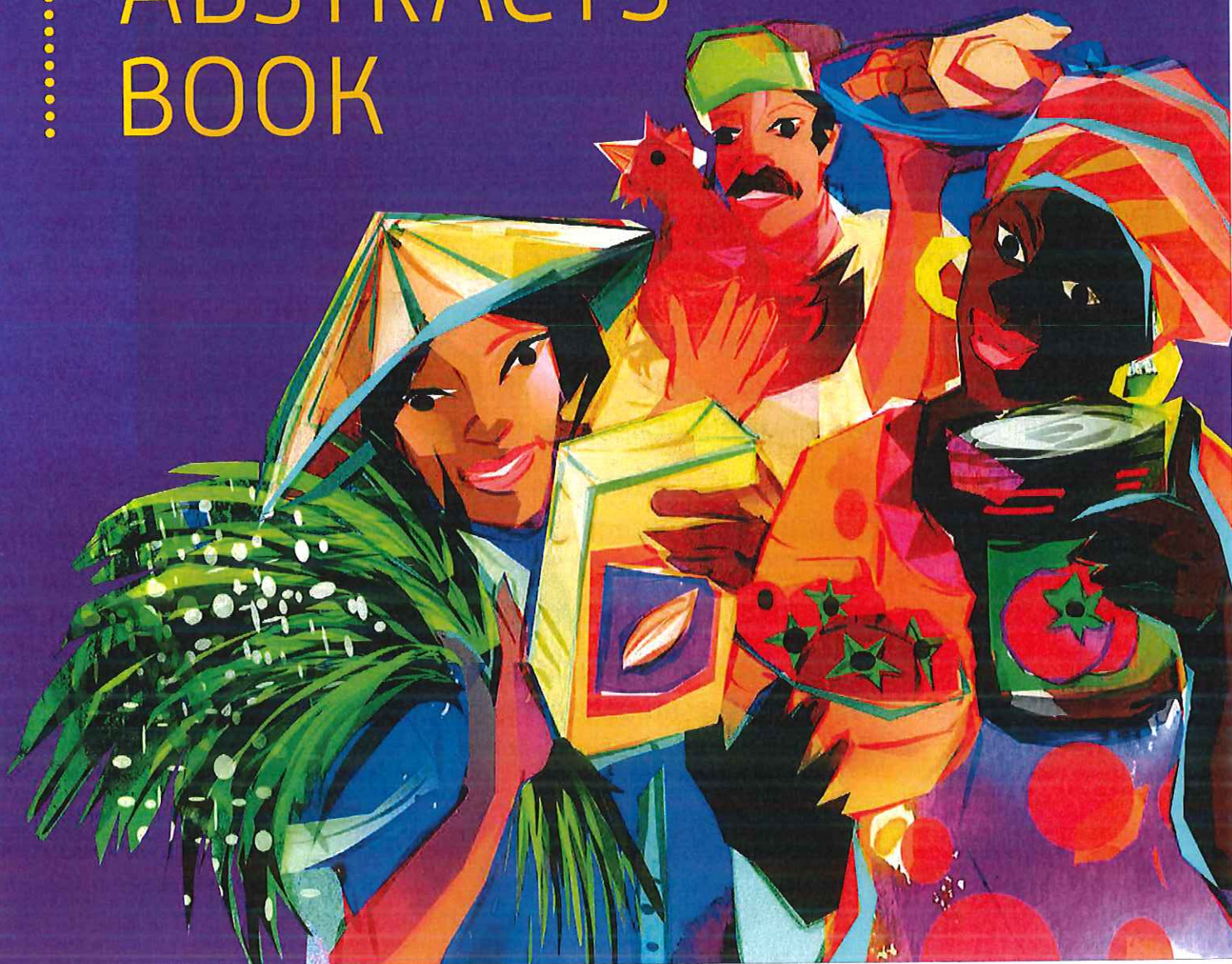


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ABSTRACTS
BOOK



Gender equity in value chain and livelihoods development: innovative approaches and tools

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Over the past decade or so, value chain development (VCD) has been promoted by public and private sector and civil society organizations as one of the principal approaches to rural poverty reduction. Underlying most approaches is the assumption that poor smallholders are prepared for participating in VCD, and that investment of their family labour and other resources in value chain activities will lead to lasting livelihood improvements. Thorough scrutiny of diverse VCD initiatives shows, however, that endowments with livelihood and business assets among smallholders and the small and medium enterprises (SME) linking them with downstream value chain actors vary widely, and households and enterprises below certain asset thresholds struggle to become 'value chain ready'. This requires differentiated approaches to VCD that account for varying asset endowments and the diversity of smallholder livelihood strategies. There is also growing evidence that gender-differentiated access to assets in smallholder households may allow some household members, particularly medium-aged men, to more readily respond to and benefit from VCD initiatives. This is a particular challenge for VCD approaches that seek to promote gender equity.

This presentation focuses on innovative tools that facilitate the design, implementation, and M&E of gender-responsive VCD. It acknowledges the inherent tension between the specialization fostered through VCD and the diversification of smallholder livelihoods in response to diverse risks and opportunities. The tools presented account for the fact that the access to and control over resources, labor division, income generation, and overall decision making in smallholder households and SMEs are differentiated by gender and age. They highlight the gender dimension for three critical aspects of VCD: 1) participatory approaches to VCD, 2) design of inclusive business models, and 3) assessment of poverty impacts of value chain development.

Particular emphasis will be put on the *5Capitals-G* methodology, an asset-based approach to gender-responsive value chain development that facilitates both the establishment of a baseline at the onset of VCD and periodic assessment of outcomes and impact. Drawing on findings from case studies in agri-food and tree-crop value chains in Latin America, Africa and Asia, gender-differentiated options for asset building at household and enterprise levels are presented, with links to gender-responsive design and implementation of participatory value chain development and inclusive business models.

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