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# WORKSHEET

## Multi-Stakeholder Role Play

This worksheet is linked to the Toolkit on Youth in Food Systems

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## Source

This Multi-stakeholder Role Play tool is based on the 'Gender in Mediation: An Exercise Handbook for Trainers' by the Centre for Security Studies at ETH Zurich and the Swiss Peace Foundation (Mason et al., 2015); The MSP Guide (Brouwer et al., 2015), and the MSP Tool Guide (Brouwer and Brouwers, 2017). The case was developed by Nina de Roo and Bram Peters.

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## Objectives

The goal of this exercise is to enable participants of a workshop or training to practice facilitation, negotiation, and communication skills, experience the perspectives of diverse stakeholders in a multi-stakeholder setting, and realise the gender, age, and power dimensions in the process of trying to find win-win situations.

As Brouwer and Brouwers (2017) note in the companion MSP Tool Guide, "role playing is an interactive tool which stimulates learning. Participants are placed in a situation where they must act out a certain scenario in role plays. There are no pre-rehearsal lines or rehearsals. Role plays are frequently used to help students understand theory by combining concepts into a practical experience. Role playing essentially is about thinking of a 'what-if' scenario" (p. 68).

## When to use it

This tool is especially useful for courses, trainings and can be valuable for all kinds of stakeholders. To enhance learning, this exercise is best done in multiple rounds.

## Instructions

For the role play to work, a well-developed case is needed in which relevant stakeholders each have their own objectives and interests for participating. These objectives might be different from other stakeholder interests, while there may also be common goals. Participants are divided into different groups, each representing a stakeholder (see **Handouts**). This MSP role play departs from the premises of a stakeholder meeting organised by one of the stakeholder representatives. The meeting is split into three sections: the first round of discussions, a break in which stakeholders can informally move around and negotiate deals, and a second round of discussions.

A few people are requested to act as observers and offer input on the process. In the final part of the reflection, it might be good to ask role play actors to comment first before the observers do so (see **Discussion questions**). This helps to keep them from being influenced by the observers' opinions.

## Steps

- Divide the participants into seven groups: one group per stakeholder. The rest of the participants will help the representative per group prepare and function as observers during the roleplay. If you don't have enough participants, it may be possible to leave out one of the stakeholders. Be aware, however, that this requires a check of all the stakeholder briefs.
- Give each group the handout below with the case situation described.
- Tell them to prepare a multi-stakeholder meeting. In preparing the meeting they should:
  - Highlight the objective to be achieved from their actor's perspective, as well as what they see as an objective that all participants could agree to.
  - The information they will share and the way they will conduct the meeting. For example, they should decide if they will have an open meeting or conduct exercises.
  - The way they will consolidate the discussions, and the output they will have.
- Each person receives a different personal characteristic of the stakeholder representative: male/female, young/middle-aged/elder. Representatives must act according to how they think this person would respond.
- The observers have the task of noting all the comments they have on the way the facilitators conduct the stakeholder meeting, and any comments on the differences among the women

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and men facilitators in conducting the meeting. They also note any differences in the way women and men, young/middle-aged/elder stakeholder participants interact in the meetings.

- Each group will go through three phases: the first round of discussions, a break in which stakeholders can informally move around and negotiate deals, and a second round of discussions.
- When one group finishes the role play, let the second group conduct their role play, and the first and third group take notes.
- When the second group finishes their role play, the third group enacts their role play, and the first and second groups take notes.
- Do not allow discussions before each group has completed the stakeholder meetings. After all three groups have completed the two rounds of meetings, ask the group to reflect on the process using the questions below (see **Discussion questions**). Remember that it is best to ask the role play actors to comment first, so they are not influenced by the views of the observers.

### Discussion questions

#### Ask the representatives:

- How did it go? What did you see happen?
- How do you feel about the meeting?

#### Ask the observers:

- What did you observe?
- Did the stakeholder meeting successfully achieve its objectives?
- What methods for conducting the meeting would have enabled better achievement of the objectives?

#### Ask everyone:

- What were your key observations regarding gender and youth?
- Did you see any differences in power, manner of speaking, or interests?
- Reflect on the facilitation and the MSP process. Reflect on whether certain differences arise from gender, age, or from the participants' style.

### Handouts

This case was developed by Bram Peters and Nina de Roo for the purpose of the Sesame Business Network (SBN) Gender and Youth workshop in Ethiopia in April 2017. The case departs from the context of an event of intensified mechanisation in the sesame sector. While the case builds on details from the area, the case can be adapted to other rural agricultural contexts in Africa.

**Seven stakeholder groups:** the company, local government, research organisation (SBN), a Micro-finance institute, a male-headed smallholder farmer cooperative, a female-headed farming group, and a seasonal labourer group.

#### The case:

- The situation is located in the north-eastern highlands of Ethiopia where sesame grows in many areas.
- A large international company, operating a farm of about 100 hectares of land, is expanding agricultural mechanisation investments by purchasing five large combine harvesters for ploughing and harvesting sesame.
- It has expressed the intention to increase the harvests and production of the land. In addition, it has offered the possibility for its harvesters to be sold to the local farmers.
- The machines are very high quality and new, but not easily operated.
- If the first machines do well, the company intends to get more.

- The local government has expressed the intention to support increased agricultural productivity. However, the local government has yet to grant permission for the use and sale of the harvesters.
- The local government wants farmers to produce as much as possible.
- The international market price of sesame is low this year.
- Smallholder farmers are active in producing sesame as well. Many of them are members of cooperatives, but not everyone.
- Many farmers receive support and advice from DAs on production methods, but the adoption rate of technologies and methods remains uncertain.
- Access to credit is a key challenge and often women-headed households have less access to finance than male-headed households.
- Seasonal labourers are a large group of people (around 324,000) performing various functions within the local sesame value chain, and many come to the area for work.

### **Representative of SBN support programme**

Background of representative: Middle-aged man

- You are a programme that supports the inclusive, competitive and sustainable improvement of the sesame sector in Northwest Ethiopia.
- You have information about an international company that is planning to sell combine harvesters to different stakeholders in the sesame value chain.
- As neutral stakeholder, the company and the local government have asked you to facilitate a meeting to discuss this opportunity that could bring major change to the sesame sector. Other invitees are the (smallholder MHH) farmer cooperative, a MFI and an active group of Female Headed Households that have indicated to be interested in this combine harvester.
- On the one hand, these combine harvesters create opportunities for farmers to improve their labour efficiency and hence increase their productivity, which is good for their income. You know very well that increasing agricultural productivity is an important objective of the government as well.
- On the other hand, you realise that these tractors are so expensive and difficult to operate that it is impossible for individual farmers to buy and operate them. Since the number of tractors is limited, there is a risk that certain farmers might be excluded from benefiting from this tractor, leaving them out of business.  
Your objective as facilitator is for all stakeholders to come to an acceptable agreement, leaving no-one behind but at the same time pleasing the company and the government, who honoured you to facilitate this meeting.

### **Representative of international company**

Background of representative: Young educated woman

- You are a young, confident and well-educated lady representing an international company with global value chain connections in sesame
- The company is relatively new in the area: you have less experience with the political, social and cultural situation and relations here.
- You are investing a substantial amount in the combine harvesters with the expectation of increasing productivity and earning income by selling the technology. This is your business model and if it doesn't pay itself back you might need to stop the plan from being implemented.
- You need to make sure the local government endorses the use of the harvesters and gives the permits.
- You want to fetch a good price for the harvesters, since there are also risks involved in buying them. The farmers groups are interesting target groups for you. It might involve encouraging them to buy or hire more land.
- However, you are not really interested in renting to female-headed households, since you have heard that they often have smaller land sizes and probably cannot get the credit together
- You want to highlight the urgency: if no one is interested in the harvesters, you will go to a different country like Kenya.

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- You asked SBN to convene this meeting with the local government, male-headed smallholder farms and female-headed farms, and MFI. But this is it, you expect no other stakeholders to participate.

### **Representative of local authority**

Background of representative: Male elder

- You are an older man with a lot of experience, connections and agricultural know-how, and you represent the local authority charged with implementing the policies of the Ethiopian government
- You like to see more investment in production technology in the sesame area
- You want farmers to invest in increasing production
- You often recommend key production practices, such as the use of fertilisers, inputs and improved technology
- You have heard of the government policy that encourages women to take advantage of opportunities in agriculture. However, you are not convinced. Every time you visit a female-headed farming household, they always seem busy with household and caring activities, or they are renting out their land. They don't seem like serious farmers!
- You have many experienced DAs in your employment, but they don't have any experience in this kind of combine harvesters, so you are unsure whether you will recommend them to farmers.
- You are also not sure about the representative of the company – the company is new here and have yet to deliver on their promises.
- You don't know if this representative fully understands the local context and the customs. After all, the lady from the company is quite young and inexperienced.
- In helping to make sure things are arranged well, you wouldn't mind if your personal financial situation were to improve with this deal.
- Unrest among seasonal labourers is something you want to avoid.

### **Representative of seasonal labourers**

Background of representative: young man

- As a group of people being both young and often from a different region in Ethiopia, it is not easy to negotiate the terms of work. When you heard about this meeting organised by the company and SBN, you decide to go to the meeting, even though you were not officially invited.
- You are afraid that you might lose a lot of work due to these harvesters! You have travelled from far, and now find out that there is much less work than expected.
- You will try to make the company try to understand the negative effect that this development will have on your livelihood.
- You also have to convince the small holder farmers and the female headed households that they need you for their work. After all, if farmers hire you, they know what to expect, and you are much cheaper than such an expensive machine!
- You want to encourage the farmers not to rent the harvesters, and instead, to invest in better working conditions so that you can do better and more efficient work.
- You might want to remind the local government about the codes of conduct for labour and the fact that many companies and smallholders are not following them optimally.
- You might try to ask for alternative work opportunities or training opportunities by the local government or via SBN.

### **Representative of smallholder male-headed household cooperative**

Background of representative: young man

- You are a young energetic man operating an own farm of five hectares and represent a cooperative of 250 farmers
- You have been working in sesame for a long time, while the company is still very new to the area, they have fewer connections to the local government
- Your cooperative members in the area are a bit worried that the increased sesame harvests of the company will decrease sesame prices at the local market before they have the chance to harvest and sell their sesame.

- Smallholder farmers are very interested in expanding production capacity as well but are also very conscious of risks and the need for profit returns.
- The average land size of the cooperative members is not very large (on average seven hectares), but you might be able to rent more land. You think that the government does not need to find out about this, otherwise you might need to pay more taxes.
- As a cooperative you have the idea that there is something to negotiate: maybe a credit scheme or group discount is possible.
- Your cooperative is interested in the tractors, but they might be too expensive, difficult to maintain, and you don't have the training to operate them.
- The seasonal labourers have arrived unannounced to the meeting. You don't necessarily know them that well ... but there might be a way to use their presence for your own negotiating position.

### **Representative of female-headed households farming group**

Background of representative: Elderly woman

- You are the proud leader of the Female Headed Household farming group, consisting of a group of 50 active widows and divorced women who head their own sesame farm. The average land size (registered and rented-in) of the members of your women's group is 4 ha. Most of the members rely heavily on hired labour, in particular for ploughing, harvesting and land clearing.
- You are invited to a stakeholder meeting that is organised to discuss the opportunities of the introduction of combine harvesters by an international sesame company. You have information that SBN is facilitating this meeting and that other stakeholders (e.g., the government, a MFI, farmers and labourers), are also interested in joining.
- You see these combine harvesters as an ideal solution. If a machine does most of the harsh work, you could concentrate on other activities such as managing your farm, but also managing your vegetable garden, sorghum and – least but not least – your children and other depending on family members! You are already dreaming of the amount of time you would gain to spend on other duties...!
- There is one problem that is you don't know the exact price of the combine harvesters, but you know they are very expensive. Without a loan or grant your farmer group would never be able to purchase such a machine.
- In the past, FHH have often been ignored when new opportunities arose. This time you will not let this happen! Your objective is thus to acquire access to at least two of those tractors. Your members expect a lot from you; if you let them down, they will select another member to become their leader.

### **Representative of Micro Finance Institute**

Background of representative: Middle-aged man

- You are product manager at a zonal MFI active in the sesame area.
- A big company is introducing combine harvesters to the sesame area, which can significantly increase productivity. However, the machines are very expensive and smallholder farmers cannot afford to purchase such a machine on their own. Even farmer cooperatives would need a loan to purchase the tractors.
- The international market price of sesame is low this year – this affects the credit balance, and you don't like to take too many risks.
- The government and the company have invited you to a stakeholder meeting to discuss the opportunities of these combine harvesters.
- Your director has explicitly instructed you not to be seduced by the government to start giving out loans to farmers with less than five ha of land: they are too small to be interesting clients for your MFI and the past has showed that they are not reliable, and the risk of non-reimbursement is significant.
- Personally, you experienced that FHH are also difficult clients. They are often so busy with other responsibilities that their farms are not well-managed. Often, they rent-out their land anyway, so you don't see much potential in this group.
- Your objective in the upcoming meeting is to explore opportunities for interesting (i.e., reliable!) clients that could increase your lending portfolio.

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## References

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