



## Purpose of the Activity:

The Access and Control Matrix facilitates an analysis of women's and men's access to and control over resources. Often women might have access to an asset, such as land they cultivate, but not be able to make decisions on how to use the asset or even the products of it. By using the Access and Control Matrix for the assets and resources that the programme provides, staff can identify who should be involved and at what stage. It can also be used to discuss gender issues in the community, by bringing community members' attention on the constraints women have in managing assets and resources.

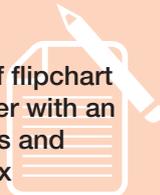


Women group completing the Access and Control Matrix, Ngorloli, Chad. Concern/Chad/2015

The Access and Control Matrix facilitates an analysis of women's and men's access to and control over resources.

## Materials:

- Two pieces of flipchart taped together with an empty Access and Control Matrix
- Board marker pens
- Note pad and pen for note-taker



## Activity and Material Preparation:

- Prepare the flipcharts by drawing an empty Access and Control Matrix (see overleaf). If working with an illiterate community, use drawings instead of text.
- Divide participants into groups based on their gender and, if relevant, age.
- Assign two facilitators to each group. One will act as note-taker. Groups of women should have a female facilitator and a female note-taker.
- Arrange participants in a circle and clear the ground in the middle. Make sure the facilitator is sitting as part of the circle.
- Ensure you have all needed materials at hand.
- Prepare a list of assets and resources which are relevant to your specific project and/or context.

## Participants:

Separate groups of men and women [8-10] of mixed socio-economic status and ages.



## Time:

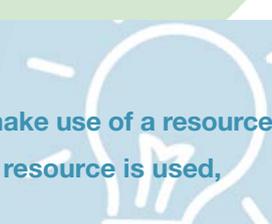
Two hours (one hour for the activity, one hour for discussion)



## Definitions:

**Access to resources** is defined as the opportunity to make use of a resource.

**Control over resources** is the power to decide how a resource is used, and who has access to it.



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## Activity Steps:

**1** Introduce yourself to the community and explain the roles you are playing as facilitator and note-taker. Introduce the activity explaining you would like to understand better how roles and responsibilities are divided in the community. At this point, **do not mention** gender roles or inequality.

**2** Ask all participants to introduce themselves and note down any particular characteristics.

**3** Establish ground rules (in a participatory manner) to ensure the group will treat each other with respect during the discussion and keep information shared confidential afterwards. Encourage participants to listen to each other and participate actively.

**4** Explain you will spend up to one hour filling in the chart and then one hour discussing together the ideas emerging from the activity. Agree to take a break half way through for refreshments, if available. Ask participants if they have any questions.

### Facilitator tip:

**Consider this a brainstorming exercise where answers are noted, even if not all members of the group agree. Bringing consensus on each point before noting it down will take too long. There are many squares to fill, so keep the discussion moving.**

**5** Place the empty Access and Control Matrix on the floor or on a flipchart stand and start inserting one or two assets that you know are important in this context, to give an example. For instance, you can write or draw “land” and “livestock” in the first two rows.

**6** Ask participants what are other assets and resources that are important in their community and note them down in the matrix. Spend a maximum of 15 minutes doing this step.

**7** Then explain the meaning of “access” and “control” over these resources or services (refer to the “Definitions” box overleaf). Ask participants if they have any questions and make sure they understand the difference before moving to the next step.

### Facilitator tip:

**You do not need to use the specific terms “access” and “control” if these are not clear or could lead to resistance in the communities you are working with. You can replace them with any culturally appropriate term as long as they make a clear distinction between using the asset and actually making decisions about how this is used or sold.**

**8** For every resource or asset, ask the group whether women and men can usually access the resource/service or not, and whether they have control over it. You can write “yes” or “no” in the table or draw symbols such as stars or happy/unhappy faces. You can use more than one symbol for each cell to represent who has “more” access or control over something. E.g. See Sample Matrix 1 below.

Use the following guiding questions in case of confusion:

- Can a woman/man use this resource in their everyday work? (ACCESS)
- Can a woman/man easily access this service without feeling ashamed or being afraid of the consequences? (ACCESS)
- Can a woman/man decide to lend this asset to their friends? (CONTROL)
- Can a woman/man decide to sell this asset? (CONTROL)

Encourage the group to mention any differences within these groups, such as how women and men from a different ethnic group or with disabilities are affected, as these groups are diverse. Record these differences in the notes.

**9** If the group jumps ahead with information that fits in another row or column, don't worry, this is very common! Write the response in the relevant square and then encourage the group to go back to the previous square to ensure nothing is missed.

**10** Explain that you have now completed the chart and would like to spend the next hour discussing the ideas in more depth and identifying how this affects their community.

Resource/Asset	Access		Control	
	Men 	Women 	Men 	Women 
Land 	★ ★	★ ★	★	
Agri tools 	★	★	★ ★	★
Small livestock 		★	★	★
Transportation 	★		★	

You can lead the following discussion either in the same separate groups of men and women or bring together both groups to encourage cross-gender dialogue.

This decision will depend on the local context, so you will need to refer to your own experience to evaluate whether a cross-gender dialogue is appropriate or presents any risks for women involved.

**11** Most importantly, women **must** be consulted before engaging in any mixed discussion. Ask them:

- Are you happy for the Access and Control Matrix you have produced today to be shared with other members of the community, including men?
- Would you feel comfortable discussing your Access and Control Matrix with men in the other group?
- If women appear hesitant or unsure about participating in a mixed discussion, do not proceed with the activity. You can have separate discussions about gender roles using the same questions.

**Take a break here if you plan to have refreshments**

### Facilitator tip:

**In this exercise you will ask each group to reflect on access and control of BOTH men and women, even if there are only men or women in the group. This is a good way to get participants to reflect about unequal gender relations. You can also learn about how men and women perceive each other and justify restrictions of access and control in that context.**

### Facilitator tip:

**Community dialogues are not meant to “provide information” or “teach” something to the participants.**

**They are an opportunity for communities to express their own views about a topic, identify a problem and its solution.**

**The role of the facilitator is to guide the discussion by using good and thought-provoking questions, not suggest solutions.**

**12** Bring the groups back together if you have decided to do so. Display the complete Access and Control Matrix completed by both groups and give participants five minutes to review them on their own. Explain to the group that the purpose of the exercise is not to combine the two versions of the tools, so not to worry too much about differences for now.

**13** Ask the group an open ended question to kick off the discussion: **What do you see happening in this chart?**

Continue the discussion using your own probing questions or use the “Questions for Discussion” below for inspiration.

During the discussion, make a note on the flipchart of any suggestions made by community members to make control and access to resources more equal.

**14** Summarise back to the group the main lessons learned during the data gathering and discussion. List any suggestions made by community members to improve unequal access and control of resources.

**15** Encourage participants to continue the discussion and try and implement some of their suggestions. Thank participants for their time and for sharing their insights with you.

## Questions for Discussion

- Do women and men have the same access to resources? If not, why?
- What types of resources are not equally accessed by women and men? Why?
- Do women and men have the same control over resources? If not, why?
- What types of resources are not equally controlled by women and men? Why?
- Why do you think these differences between women and men exist?
- What are the implications of these differences in your lives?
- Are there any negative implications for women when they cannot make decisions about resources?
- Are there any negative implications for men when they have to make all the decisions about resources?
- Are there any negative implications for children in the family? Are there any negative implications for the whole community?
- Can these differences have an impact on the capacity of families and communities to prepare and recover from shocks?
- Do these differences have an impact on women and men’s participation in development programmes and activities?
- Does anyone have an example of a woman who could make decisions about this type of resource (e.g. land, livestock, etc.)? What happened in that case?
- It is possible to change women and men’s level of control over resources? If so, how?
- How would your life be different if decision-making power was shared equally among family members?

## Variations

You may want to divide the focus groups into smaller clusters for this activity to better represent the reality of different groups. It can be interesting to do this exercise **by livelihood group**. Are women in pastoralist communities more or less in control of certain assets?

You can use this tool to examine variations in **gender roles over time**, by asking elder men and women to fill in a Access and Control Matrix thinking about when they were young and compare it with one completed today.

## Variations for sectors

**The Access and Control Matrix can be used by each Concern programme team to explore access and control issues related to specific assets, resources or services relevant to their sector.** For instance, Food, Income and Markets (FIM) teams can focus on livestock and agricultural assets, WASH teams can focus on common water resources and hygiene products, etc. Brief guiding notes are provided below for each sector.



### Food, Income and Markets (FIM)

You can use the Access and Control Matrix at the stage of determining which activities to prioritise or which assets to distribute, to ensure that both men and women are going to benefit equally from the planned activities. You can also utilise the tool after distributions and/or income-generating activities to monitor whether women beneficiaries are remaining in control of the resources or whether men are ultimately benefitting even if they are not targeted.

**How:** Prepare the list of assets in advance of the meeting and draw it on the empty Access and Control Matrix. Only include asset and resources that you are interested in finding out about. For instance, you can include all the potential assets you are planning to distribute (e.g. seeds, agricultural tools, donkeys, goats) or you have distributed in the past. You can also include all assets and resources needed to engage in a particular livelihood activity, e.g. land, seeds, agricultural tools, water for irrigation to conduct homestead gardening activities.

Working with separate groups of men and women, ask them to indicate who has access and who has control over each of the items listed. Use guiding questions under Step 8 overleaf to help them complete the matrix.

If you are conducting the exercise after implementing income-generating activities or distribution of assets, you might also want to ask:

- Who has access and who has control of the [ITEM] distributed by Concern? (E.g. Who takes care of the goats distributed by Concern? Who decides when to sell the goats distributed by Concern? Who controls the income generated through the sale of goat milk?)
- Who controls the income generated through the [ACTIVITY SUPPORTED BY CONCERN]? (E.g. Who controls the income generated through the sale of vegetables cultivated in homestead gardens?)

Once you have completed the matrix for all items with both groups you can, if everyone agrees, lead a mixed discussion to reflect on the impact of disparities in access and control.

It is helpful to refer back to Concern's targeting criteria which were determined jointly with the community. For instance, if Concern and the community decided to target female-headed households because they are perceived as more vulnerable, but the assets distributed by Concern were then under the control of their male relatives or in-laws, you can ask:

- Are we reducing the vulnerability of women living alone if men continue to hold control over all of their assets and make all the decisions?
- Are there certain assets that female heads of households should be able to control to ensure they can protect their families and promote their wellbeing?



### Water, Hygiene and Sanitation & Health and Nutrition (WASH)

You can use the Access and Control Matrix to analyse whether men and women have control of the resources they need to ensure health, nutrition and hygiene within their homes. These resources include income, services such as health centres, but also natural resources such as water points, firewood and so on. This analysis will help you determine who you should target with behaviour change activities. For instance, if men control income needed to buy soap for handwashing, you will need to ensure that hygiene messages are targeting men as well. The exercise will also help you draw attention to inequalities in access and control which might have a negative impact on health and nutrition outcomes.

**How:** Prepare the list of assets in advance of the meeting and draw it on the empty Access and Control Matrix. Only include asset and resources that you are interested in finding out about, such as health centres, pharmacies, soap, means of transportation to go to the health centre, cooking implements, water points, etc.

Working with separate groups of men and women, ask them to indicate who has access and who has control over each of the items listed. Use guiding questions under Step 8 above to help them complete the map.

Once you have completed the matrix for all items with both groups you can, if everyone agrees, lead a mixed discussion to reflect on the impact of disparities in access and control. You can use questions like:

- Would the health/nutrition of children improve if women were allowed to control [ITEM]? (E.g. If women were able to buy soap whenever they needed it, would this benefit the hygiene and health of the household?)