



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



# Gender transformative approaches for food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture

A compendium of  
fifteen good practices



Joint Programme on

Gender  
Transformative  
Approaches

for Food Security and Nutrition

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
International Fund for Agricultural Development  
World Food Programme

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

A-WEAI	Abbreviated Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index
CBF	community-based facilitator
CBT	community-based trainer
CDO	Community Development Officer
CDF	Cooperative Development Foundation
CESPRO	Asociación Coordinadora Salvadoreña de Pequeños Productores Organizados
CLAC	Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair Trade Small Producers and Workers
DCDO	District Community Development Officer
EHFP	Enhanced Homestead Food Production
EOGEP	Equal Opportunities and Gender Equity Policy
FAL	Functional Adult Literacy
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFBS	Farmers’ Field and Business Schools
FFLS	Farmer Field and Life School
GALS	Gender Action Learning System
GEM	Gender Equitable Men
GBV	gender-based violence
GMF	Gender Model Family
GTA	gender transformative approach
HKI	Helen Keller International
HRNS	Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
JP RWEE	Joint Programme to Accelerate Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women
JFFLS	Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools
NGO	non-governmental organization
PGR	participatory gender review
PRELNOR	Project for the Restoration of Livelihoods in Northern Uganda
Pro-WEAI	Project-level Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index
P4P	Purchase for Progress
RWAMREC	Rwanda Men’s Resource Centre
SAA	Social Analysis and Action
SACCO	savings and credit cooperative
SDU	Smallholder Development Unit
SG	SEND Ghana
SILC	Savings and Internal Lending Communities
SSL	SEND Sierra Leone
TESFA	Towards Improved Economic and Sexual/Reproductive Health Outcomes for Adolescent Girls, Ethiopia
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
VODP2	Vegetable Oil Development Programme 2, Uganda
VESA	Village Economic and Social Associations
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WEAI	Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WFP	World Food Programme

Part 1

# Introduction and synthesis of fifteen gender transformative approaches



# 1. Introduction

Many multilateral and bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are seeking ways to achieve profound and sustainable development objectives by tackling the root causes of gender inequality. They recognize that while it is necessary to focus on treating the symptoms of gender inequality, such as unequal access to productive resources, this is not enough on its own to effect change. Gender transformative approaches (GTAs) that revolutionize the lives of participating individuals and their families, groups and communities have gained traction during the last decade or so in the context of food security and agriculture. GTAs and greater gender equality deliver improved development outcomes, gains in the private sector, and improved project performance and sustainability.

However, many implementing organizations are grappling with similar issues such as how to capture the transformative impacts of GTAs; how to strengthen their outreach and take them to scale in a context-specific manner; and how to convince others of the power of GTAs to generate sustainable social and economic benefits.

The three United Nations Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD] and World Food Programme [WFP]) are implementing a joint programme entitled “Taking gender transformative approaches to scale for impact on SDG2 to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” (referred to as the Joint Programme), with financial support from the European Union (EU).

As part of the Joint Programme’s activities, a GTA experience-sharing workshop was organized at FAO headquarters in Rome in May 2019. A total of 44 experts and practitioners from the EU, the RBAs, NGOs, academia and research centres, the private sector and civil society organizations participated in the workshop to share their experiences and lessons learned on GTAs. With Agenda 2030’s commitment to gender equality and leaving no-one behind, coupled with the Decade of Family Farming 2019–2028, the timing was opportune to share GTA experiences and learn from each other.

This compendium of 15 GTAs is an output from the workshop. Its purpose is fourfold:

- to take stock and draw lessons from experiences from existing practices of GTAs;
- to be a resource for agencies already working with GTAs to help identify opportunities for strengthening their GTA work or to link up with complementary interventions;
- to provide guidance on how to apply GTAs in any organization or institution working for enhanced food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture; and
- to raise awareness of and advocate for GTAs by showcasing examples of good practices or successful approaches that contribute to positive gender-related and non-gender-related changes towards food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture and rural development.

The publication has two parts. Part 1 provides a synthesis of the main features of the 15 GTAs included in this compendium, presenting the core characteristics of 15 GTAs and describing the implementation arrangements, implementation cycle, the potential results of GTAs and their key success factors and challenges. Part 1 concludes with observations on ideas as to how GTAs could be taken to scale. Part 2 comprises the individual templates of the 15 GTAs.

## 2. Synthesis of fifteen gender transformative approaches

This section provides an overview of the 15 GTAs presented in this compendium and a synthesis of their main features. It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive compilation of GTAs, and that gender transformative programming does not necessarily need to employ a strict model, methodology or tool, such as those presented in this compendium.

The compendium presents contributions from the following organizations that are active GTA practitioners in the agricultural and rural sector:

- Multilateral agencies: CGIAR, FAO, IFAD and WFP
- NGOs: CARE, Helen Keller International (HKI), Oxfam Novib, Promundo, SEND International and Trias
- Non-profit foundation: Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (HRNS)
- Private sector: AgDevCo.

The geographical coverage of the 15 GTAs is dominated by East and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa, Central and South Asia and South East Asia. A few are operational in Latin America.

Three examples in the compendium differ from the others and consequently are analysed to a lesser extent in this overview. GENNOVATE is a diagnostic study developed by the CGIAR to understand gender norms in order to inform the design of interventions and policies. However, several GENNOVATE tools can also be used to stimulate critical reflection and dialogue as part of other gender transformative interventions. The Joint Programme to Accelerate Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE) – implemented by the RBAs and UN Women – demonstrates an integrated approach to address various dimensions of women's empowerment, including the complementary use of several GTAs (FAO's Dimitra Clubs, Oxfam Novib/IFAD's Gender Action Learning System (GALS) and WFP's Community Conversations). AgDevCo is a specialist investor in Africa, providing growth capital to build sustainable agribusinesses. Although gender issues are not the primary focus of its investments, AgDevCo works with agribusinesses to promote the empowerment women in smallholder outgrower schemes.

## 2.1. Core characteristics of the fifteen gender transformative approaches

Although the 15 GTAs included in this compendium differ in their origin and context, it is possible to identify six core characteristics that make them gender transformative. These are that they:

- address the underlying social norms, attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate gender inequalities, which are rooted in discriminatory social, economic and formal and informal institutions, policies and laws;
- use participatory approaches to facilitate dialogue, trust, ownership, visioning and behaviour change at various levels (individual/household, group/community, institution/organization and policies/laws), based on social and experiential learning;
- require critical reflection on deep-rooted social and gender norms and attitudes in order to challenge power dynamics and bring about a paradigm shift at all levels;
- explicitly engage with men and boys to address the concepts of masculinity and gender;
- engage with influential norm holders, such as traditional and religious leaders, lead farmers, agricultural and health extension workers, school principals, elected representatives, local authorities and members of legal structures; and
- are flexible and may be adapted to different contexts.

The 15 GTAs typically address the following areas of gender inequality:<sup>1</sup>

- unequal workloads between women and men, especially regarding unpaid care and domestic work;
- women's lack of voice in household decision-making;
- women's unequal access to, and ownership of, resources;
- gender-based violence (GBV) and other aspects of well-being; and
- women's unequal participation in organizations, both as members and leaders.

Depending on local conditions, GTAs also address harmful practices (such as female genital mutilation or child marriage) and sexual and reproductive health.

GTAs are usually embedded in broader development activities, such as women's economic empowerment, livelihood improvements, savings and microfinance, climate-change resilience, nutrition and hygiene, value chains, and engaging with youth, farmer organizations and governance.

## 2.2. Implementation arrangements

### 2.2.1. Target groups and entry points

The GTAs presented in the compendium work with women and men who are active as smallholders, members of producer organizations or savings and loan groups, entrepreneurs and employees, and community members and leaders. The majority are poor and illiterate. Several GTAs promote outreach among youth – including FAO's Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) – and two pay specific attention to working with people living with disabilities (GALS and Promundo's Journeys of Transformation).

<sup>1</sup> The list focuses on the main areas that were identified in the 15 GTAs presented in this Compendium. There are many other areas of gender inequality that GTAs seek to address such as unequal access to sufficient and nutritious food, unequal access to markets, training, rural advisory services, financial services and information and communication technologies, limited/restricted mobility and agency, unequal participation in policymaking and law-making processes, unequal control over income, unequal access to education and information, and unequal income-generating opportunities.

The scale of intervention varies from mentoring very poor households on a one-to-one basis to working with groups or community meetings (Table 1). While HKI's Nurturing Connections<sup>®</sup> pays specific attention to the significant role played by in-laws (in addition to women and their partners) in the process of behaviour change, HRNS's Gender Household Approach also involves children, based on young people's eagerness to drive change. AgDevCo works with agribusinesses to develop opportunities for women outgrowers and entrepreneurs, while Trias focuses on producer organizations. The GALS approach engages at several levels, including individuals, households, small-scale and micro-entrepreneurs, community-based groups and private sector actors. Two GTAs (CARE's Social Analysis and Action [SAA] and Promundo's Journeys of Transformation) specifically recognize the importance of facilitating critical reflection and behaviour change among project staff as an integral part of facilitating the transformation process within communities.

**Table 1: Examples of entry points for different gender transformative approaches**

Entry point	GTA
Couples and their households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender Action Learning System (GALS) (Oxfam Novib, IFAD, Hivos, Twin and Twin Trading)</li> <li>• Gender Household Approach (Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung)</li> <li>• Gender Model Family (SEND)</li> <li>• Individual Household Mentoring (IFAD)</li> <li>• Journeys of Transformation (Promundo)</li> <li>• Nurturing Connections<sup>®</sup> (HKI)</li> <li>• Joint Programme to Accelerate Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE) (FAO, IFAD, WFP and UN Women)</li> </ul>
Groups and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Conversations (WFP)</li> <li>• Dimitra Clubs (FAO)</li> <li>• Farmers' Field and Business Schools (FFBS) (CARE)</li> <li>• Farmer Field and Life School (FFLS) and Junior FFLS (JFFLS) (FAO)</li> <li>• Gender Action Learning System (GALS) (Oxfam Novib, IFAD, Hivos, Twin and Twin Trading)</li> <li>• Gender Mainstreaming in Member-based Organizations (Trias)</li> <li>• Social Analysis and Action (SAA) (CARE)</li> <li>• Joint Programme to Accelerate Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE) (FAO, IFAD, WFP and UN Women)</li> </ul>
Organizations/ formal institutions/ private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender Action Learning System (GALS) (Oxfam Novib, IFAD, Hivos, Twin and Twin Trading)</li> <li>• Models to Empower Women in Outgrower Schemes (AgDevCo)</li> <li>• Joint Programme to Accelerate Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE) (FAO, IFAD, WFP and UN Women)</li> </ul>
Lead agency/ Project staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journeys of Transformation (Promundo)</li> <li>• Social Analysis and Action (SAA) (CARE)</li> </ul>

### 2.2.2. Partnerships for implementing gender transformative approaches

The implementation of GTAs often requires the establishment of partnerships with, for example, international and national NGOs, local civil society organizations, government agencies (e.g. local and district governments), research and academic institutions, United Nations agencies and the private sector. Dimitra Clubs also partner with local community radio stations; Trias partners with the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair Trade Small Producers and Workers (CLAC); and AgDevCo works directly with agribusinesses. The Gender Household Approach is the only GTA that is implemented solely by the lead agency, HRNS.



### 2.2.3. Facilitation

There are usually two levels of facilitation in the GTA implementation process:

- **External:** general oversight and coordination of the GTA implementation process is undertaken by facilitators who are either existing staff of an implementing organization or hired specifically for this purpose.
- **Internal:** direct involvement with implementation is undertaken by facilitators from the community. These facilitators or change agents/champions often emerge during the implementation process either to facilitate their own group or promote outreach to new groups and households. Occasionally they are recruited deliberately for this purpose, such as the mentors for Individual Household Mentoring (IFAD).

If groups are heterogeneous, attention should be paid to ensuring a gender balance among the facilitators. If a group is homogeneous, the facilitator is usually the same sex as the members.

The GTAs share a common understanding of the desirable characteristics of facilitators. They include:

- a commitment to gender equality and an ability to model equitable gender relations;
- an ability to facilitate without dominating and to engage with participants in a participatory, non-hierarchical manner, without teaching (“facilitating from the back”);
- an ability to listen and be respectful of other people’s views;
- experience and knowledge of the local cultural context; and
- being respected and trustworthy.

In addition, community-based facilitators (CBFs) are expected to meet a number of specific features, including a volunteer spirit; respect within their community; an ability to mobilize the community; an open mind; proactivity and resourcefulness; a basic level of literacy; knowledge of the local language; time availability; good communication skills; and a willingness to reflect on their own attitudes and practices and change their behaviour. Community-based facilitators often receive a modest facilitation allowance to cover transport and other incidentals.

The training for facilitators is often done through training of trainers or a cascade approach. The training typically lasts five to ten days but sometimes lasts between 15 to 20 days. GALS has found this training is most effective when done outside the classroom, in the community. The topics covered usually include:

- an introduction to gender equality, women’s empowerment and masculinity;
- a reflection on and analysis of gender issues in the local context and how they affect the lives of different members of the community;
- the GTA methodology, covering the principles, process and operational aspects;
- insights on how to engage with women, men, couples and norm holders; and
- technical topics, where relevant, such as nutrition, sustainable agriculture, village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) or producer organizations.

Refresher training is usually provided at the end of an implementation cycle. Some GTAs provide facilitators with follow-up ad hoc training, coaching and supervision by experts throughout the implementation cycle. GALS has developed an international network of GALS practitioners and held South–South events across Africa; this has been a powerful way for exchanging information, developing skills and fostering peer learning among facilitator practitioners.

### 2.2.4. Monitoring and evaluation

Many GTAs encourage participants to develop their own indicators to complement some standard ones. Some GTAs encourage collective learning as part of the monitoring process. Internal monitoring is conducted by participants to keep track of their progress at the relevant level of intervention (individual, household, group or community). External monitoring (for field monitoring, quarterly reporting, baseline and midterm reviews) is undertaken by facilitators or the implementing agency and their partners. Independent external evaluations can also be conducted.

The data collected are a mix of quantitative (such as participation rates and physical outcomes) and qualitative to capture behavioural and attitudinal changes at different levels associated with greater gender equality.

Several GTAs (JP RWEE, Nurturing Connections<sup>®</sup> and Gender Mainstreaming in Member-based Organizations) use the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), including the Project-level WEAI (Pro-WEAI) and Abbreviated WEAI (A-WEAI) variants. CARE's Farmers' Field and Business Schools (FFBS) approach uses CARE's Women's Empowerment Index (a WEAI variant), a Coping Strategies Index for livelihoods resilience, a group performance tracker and impact stories at the household level.

Promundo has developed a Gender Equitable Men (GEM) scale to directly measure change in attitudes towards gender norms. When possible, the results are compared with a control group to understand whether the addition of the gender transformative male-engagement component has contributed to greater economic impacts of the programme.

Some of the tools from GALS (such as the Challenge Action Tree) and GENNOVATE (such as the Ladder of Life) can be used to monitor changes in gender norms and agency.

### 2.2.5. Costs

The items of expenditure vary significantly between GTAs depending on the extent to which activities are led by the implementing agency or by the community. For example, in many instances the facilitators, change agents or champions are volunteers but in others they receive payment.

The main items of expenditure include:

- initial context analysis and formative research undertaken by project staff or consultants;
- preparation or adaptation of manuals and information material;
- training of trainers and training of facilitators at agency, organization and community levels;
- meetings with the community, launch events, training of participants, experience-sharing sessions, exchange visits; and
- monitoring and review meetings.

A few GTAs provide agricultural inputs directly to participants:

- FFBS and FAO's Farmer Field and Life School (FFLS) provide materials to establish demonstration plots for crops and livestock.
- Dimitra Clubs give community radios and up to two simple mobile phones per club (this is provided only after a club is considered to be mature in facilitation and problem-solving techniques, in order to avoid triggering motivation based on material provisions).

- Individual Household Mentoring initially provides households with agricultural inputs to get them started. Towards the end of the mentoring process they receive a food-security grant to enable them to take a significant step towards establishing viable livelihoods. Monthly allowances are paid to the mentors in recognition of their workload.

It is difficult to estimate an average cost per GTA because costs vary significantly by country, the scale of implementation and methodology. However, they generally range from USD 1 500 to USD 5 000 per group.

## 2.3. Implementation cycle

Examples for main steps in a GTA's implementation cycle are presented in Table 2 and discussed below.

**Table 2: Examples for main steps in the implementation cycle**

GTA	Gender transformative reflection by staff	Gender analysis and adaptation of manual/ curriculum	Entry points		Self-reflection and action	Engaging with community	Experience-sharing among participants	Outreach by participants	Duration (years) and graduation
			Groups (number of people)	Engaging with couples					
Community Conversations		X	50–60		X	X			1–2
Dimitra Clubs			20–30		X	X	X	X	1–2
Gender Action Learning System (GALS)			X	X	X	X	X	X	1–3
Gender Household Approach		X		X	X	X		X	3–4
Gender Mainstreaming in Member-based Organizations			X		X			X	3
Gender Model Family (GMF)				X	X	X	X	X	1
Farmers' Field and Business Schools (FFBS)			100		X	X			3–4
Farmer Field and Life School (FFLS)			25–30		X				1
Individual Household Mentoring				X	X	X			1–2
Journeys of Transformation	X	X		X	X	X			1
Nurturing Connections®		X		X	X	X			1
Social Analysis and Action (SAA)	X	X	25–30		X	X			1–2

**Gender transformative reflection by staff:** As shown in Table 2, transforming staff capacities and mindsets is a key component of only two of the 15 GTAs: SAA and Journeys of Transformation. Their staff critically reflect on their own gendered attitudes and behaviours, which enables them to appreciate the significance of gender transformation and understand the relevance of GTAs for their work.

**Analysis to identify existing social and gender norms and adaptation of manuals:** In several GTAs, project staff undertake a detailed gender analysis prior to engaging with the community. The findings are used to prepare or adapt a manual or curriculum.

**Entry points:** Many GTAs engage with couples (i.e. the adult male and female living in a house) and their households as the principal entry point for stimulating behaviour change, while others work with groups, organizations or communities. Groups are usually formed by drawing women and men together from existing groups (such as self-help groups, VSLAs or producer organizations) within the community into a specific group for GTA purposes. The number of group participants ranges from 20–30 members up to 100 people.

**Self-analysis, reflection and commitment to change:** The process of self-analysis lies at the heart of all 15 GTAs, regardless of whether this takes place in groups or households. Interactive tools and approaches (including role play, drama, games and visualization) are used to stimulate the engagement of, and critical reflection by, participants. The output is usually a time-bound plan noting responsibility for specific actions. Individual plans can be consolidated through discussion to form household action plans.

**Engaging with the community:** Many GTAs engage with norm holders (such as traditional and religious leaders, lead farmers, agricultural and health extension workers, school principals, elected representatives, local authorities, members of legal structures, etc.) as well as the wider community. The purpose is twofold: to create a supportive environment for change and to inspire others to embark on a similar process of change. Some GTAs use drama as an effective medium to stimulate discussion while others organize community discussions on gender inequalities and how they may be addressed. SAA specifically forms a core group of power holders in a community to increase buy-in and support the scaling up of the adoption of new social norms.

**Experience-sharing among participants:** A few GTAs build in formal experience-sharing sessions between the participants which become a key strategy in the scaling up and replication process. For example:

- Dimitra Clubs organize forums in which Dimitra Club members discuss their experiences and self-assess progress. Representatives of line ministries and other stakeholders, including local authorities, United Nations organizations and donors, are also invited to attend.
- The GALS participatory gender review (PGR) is conducted at the end of the catalyst phase for participants to appreciate the changes in their livelihoods and gender relations, deepen their understanding of gender inequality and the link to laws, and to evaluate peer learning and map the way forward for scaling up.
- SEND's Gender Model Family organizes monthly and quarterly meetings among participating couples and an annual assembly for practitioners and other stakeholders such as political, youth, religious and traditional leaders, women and gender activists and the media.

**Outreach:** A few methodologies include outreach by participants as part of the implementation cycle as a key element in sharing and scaling up the methodology.

- Pyramid sharing is an integral part of the GALS process. GALS champions emerge who have successfully applied GALS in their own lives and voluntarily reach out to others to share their experiences; they are also invited by the implementing agency to train people in other communities.
- Couples trained as change agents under the Gender Household Approach reach out to other members of their producer groups.
- Gender Model Families use their positive experiences to champion and advocate for gender equality in their communities.
- Women who have been trained in leadership by Trias replicate these experiences with other women in their producer organization.

**Duration and graduation:** Most GTAs operate on a one- to two-year cycle. A few operate for a longer period to complete the full transformative process but notice that changes start taking place much earlier. The two methodologies based on farmer field schools (FFBS and FFLS) follow the agricultural seasonal calendar of a particular crop and integrate various business and life skills into the programme. For example, the GALS has two distinct phases: the catalyst phase (six months) during which GALS is localized in a given context and GALS champions emerge with their stories of change; and the mainstreaming phase (lasting from one to three years) in which participatory decision-making and action learning are integrated into groups, interventions, decision spaces and organizations.

The process of gender transformative change is lifelong. While many GTAs have an end of implementation cycle, many groups continue to operate beyond the end of the formal process. For example, Community Conversations reconvene if issues arise that need to be addressed. Some – such as FFBS or SAA – evolve into a producer group or VSLA. Dimitra Club members might also decide to start their own producer group but would also keep the Dimitra Club as a separate entity because its purpose is very different from that of a producer organization. The FFBS uses a group readiness assessment tool that evaluates governance practices, ability to manage activities and access services and inputs to determine whether a group is ready to graduate.

Individual Household Mentoring has a specific graduation pathway that facilitates growth and social inclusion. Households taking part in this approach grow from undertaking near-nil investments to taking the first steps towards food security and good sanitation, to then interacting with other groups and integrating with other development activities in the community, including government programmes. Even after the end of the cycle, mentors and their households may continue to meet, albeit informally and at a very reduced frequency.

## 2.4. Results of gender transformative approaches

### 2.4.1. Number of beneficiaries reached

The number of beneficiaries typically ranges from 2 500 to 4 000 people when a GTA is implemented as an individual stand-alone project. Some GTAs have been implemented as part of a broader project or replicated in several contexts (including AgDevCo, Dimitra Clubs, FFBS, FFLS, GALS and Nurturing Connections®) and have reached a significant number of beneficiaries (between 150 000 to 200 000 individuals). Women typically account for around 50 percent to 65 percent of beneficiaries. Many GTAs also include members of participants' households among the direct

beneficiaries. It is important to note that it is not just the number of beneficiaries reached but the quality of engagement. Hence, even when the number of beneficiaries is small, the GTA – as a driver of transformation change – can generate a substantial positive impact on lives and livelihoods.

### 2.4.2. Main changes attributed to gender transformative approaches

GTAs presented in the compendium generate profound, irreversible benefits in addressing the root causes of gender inequalities, which, in turn, contribute to achieving gains in other areas. Participants understand the links between gender inequalities and their impact on people's lives and livelihoods. Women's and men's eyes are opened to the potential of women, and women become free from constraints that previously inhibited them.

The specific changes attributed to the GTAs are as follows:

- **Changes in attitudes towards harmful practices:** Attitudes about gender equality in family-life change and harmful practices – such as acceptance of domestic violence – are challenged. Engaging with men, boys and norm holders to address discriminatory gendered practices plays a crucial role in unlocking women's potential to challenge such practices and pursue other opportunities. Women and men increase their understanding about the benefits to be reaped when their lives are freed from patriarchal ideologies.
- **Improved intra-household relations including decision-making and distribution of workloads:** The GTAs result in more equitable distribution of workloads and household decision-making. Women and girls gain increased confidence and self-esteem. They have more voice and control over resources, including their own time and health-seeking behaviour (such as the use of family planning). Communication between couples improves, resulting in improved intra-household relations and greater harmony in the home. Household members share aspirations and work together as a unit, with more openness, transparency and collaboration. They appreciate that addressing gender inequalities results in benefits for all.
- **Increased productivity:** As a result of achieving greater gender equality within the home, household members have more equal access to resources and more opportunities to engage in productive activities. This can contribute to improved food security and nutrition; greater market engagement and increased income; strengthened value chains; more diversified and resilient livelihoods; and improved well-being. Groups and producer organizations become more gender-responsive and their performance improves.
- **Improved participation and leadership:** Women's participation in groups, as both members and leaders, is stronger and they develop the capacity to participate and speak in public. Many act as role models and some stand for elected office. Male leaders exercise leadership differently. Women are seen as equal actors in value chains and there is more equitable treatment of women as employees.
- **Strengthened communities:** Communities become more organized and resilient and act as agents of change rather than mere recipients of external aid. They interact with local authorities to create an enabling environment for improved citizenship and local governance, and engage in policy dialogue. They can introduce written by-laws that address a range of gender-related issues, such as protection from gender-based violence and rights to land. Pyramid outreach networks operating through peer sharing and learning develop a community-level movement to change gender norms. Some communities continue to hold discussions to support positive behaviour change by using groups established by the GTA or existing platforms such as community meetings or fairs.

- **Gains for youth:** The next generation also reaps benefits from greater equality in the home attributed to the GTAs. They benefit from improved parenting skills and treating girls and boys equally (especially regarding household tasks and school attendance). This is particularly important for young girls who often are at the bottom of the hierarchical power structure in many rural societies.
- **Gains for project staff:** GTA processes enable project and government staff to strengthen their analytical, participatory and communication skills, which enables them to work better with women and men from poor households. Most significantly, those GTAs that specifically encourage staff to personally reflect on and discuss gender inequality result in increased consciousness and positive behaviour change.

### 2.4.3. Sustainability of impact

By their very nature, GTAs generate change that most participants consider to be irreversible because the benefits reaped are so significant. The sustainability of impact after completion of the GTA activity is further strengthened if, during implementation, attention is paid to the following:

- Working with couples who learn together and apply the learning in all spheres of their life.
- Strengthening the capacity of implementing partners to support the process of change and the capacities of government at different levels to support the change once the project is over.
- Developing the skills of facilitators and mentors who are based in the community and can continue to provide support after the completion of the activity; this is enhanced if groups or households appreciate their efforts and contribute towards their facilitation costs.
- Creating an enabling environment supportive of behavioural change at community, institutional and policy levels (including government buy-in and legislative change in favour of gender equality such as land tenure reform).
- Integrating GTAs into other project activities, such as savings and loan associations, and embedding them into existing systems, such as government initiatives or the agricultural extension curriculum.
- Engaging with agribusinesses to strengthen their understanding of the business case for gender equality.

Several GTAs have been taken up by implementing partners and government departments and integrated into other interventions. Examples include Community Conversations in Ethiopia, Gender Model Family in Ghana, Dimitra Clubs in Niger and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, FFBS in Malawi, Individual Household Mentoring in Uganda, and Nurturing Connections® in Bangladesh.

## 2.5. Key success factors and challenges

### 2.5.1. Key success factors

GTAs are successful in terms of delivering gender transformative changes and as innovative methodologies.

Factors that contribute to making GTAs successful in addressing gender inequalities include the following:

- Starting with a self-analysis of their own lives helps people realize that they are part of the solution to any challenge that they may be facing, and they can commit to plan for change.

- Focusing at the household level gets to the roots of gender inequality and helps achieve effective gender transformation. Working with couples and households – instead of providing support only to women – avoids conflict. Households develop more quickly when household members share common objectives, develop a household plan and engage more fully with opportunities for economic development.
- Creating a supportive environment at community level – including specifically engaging with peers and norm holders as well as the community as a whole – enables women and men to move away from traditional roles and norms, and live their lives differently. Without involving the broader community, change is much more difficult.
- Challenging the traditional views of masculinity enables men to live positively, and work and live with women as equals.
- Ensuring women and men are both empowered by GTAs creates sustained transformation. Once they have experienced the benefits of gender equality most do not want to revert to previous practices.

The following features contribute to the success of GTA methodologies:

- Many of the tools are flexible and can be adapted to the local context.
- Participatory facilitation uses creative ways to engage with participants, and pictorial tools clarify thoughts and ground visions in reality.
- Participants develop self-reliance and set the pace of change; sharing experiences creates safe spaces to address difficult topics.
- Some benefits are experienced relatively quickly – such as sharing household tasks – and this motivates participants and stimulates buy-in from others.
- GTAs can be integrated into other initiatives to create more opportunities for sustainable livelihood development (for example, farmer field schools, savings and loan groups, producer organizations).
- The energy to share the methodology comes from individuals, couples and households who reach out to inspire others in their community and act as role models.
- The training of facilitators based in the community develops a local resource that remains after the end of the project.
- GTAs have the capacity to become the key to realizing other empowerment activities not necessarily related to gender equality. For example, the process of Community Conversations serves as a mobilizing factor and the main pillar for other project components, such as business skills training, revolving loans and income-generation activities, functional adult literacy classes and the provision of labour-saving technologies. Beneficiaries rated the conversations as the major means by which most of the meaningful changes materialized.

It should be noted that, as shown by the experience of the JP RWEE, changing social norms is a long-term process that is often not compatible with the short lifespan of a programme or project. However, integrated interventions with a strong focus on individual, community and institutional ownership can help accelerate the results.

### 2.5.2. Challenges of gender transformative approaches

Despite their successes, GTAs encounter various challenges. The following six challenges, and some measures to overcome them, are experienced most frequently by the GTAs presented in the compendium:



- **Shortage of facilitation skills, especially among women:** an investment in training and ongoing mentoring by experienced project staff is required to overcome the shortage of people with participatory facilitation skills. Linkages with local universities may increase the number of women with relevant facilitation skills.
- **Volunteer fatigue:** several methodologies rely heavily on volunteers to lead the GTA process. These volunteers can be motivated by formally recognizing their role through certification, exchange visits, skills development and registration with government as community service providers.
- **Reluctance to change:** some men and members of their extended family (such as parents, in-laws, grandparents or older siblings) dislike changing traditional practices, such as men participating in household tasks or ending child marriage. Solutions include greater community engagement with GTA facilitators, an increase in the number of GTA practitioners in the community to create a critical and visible mass of people changing their lives, and leaders and participants acting as role models of gender transformative practices and behaviours.
- **Lack of understanding about GTAs:** GTAs differ from common development approaches and some members of the development community may need to be convinced of these approaches and the benefits they generate. Project staff need to understand the importance of investing in and completing the GTA process, including implementation support. Changing the mindset of staff through critical reflection is crucial, yet may be one of the first items to be cut if budgets are tight, on the assumption that staff are already knowledgeable about it.
- **Measuring impact and attributing change:** some aspects of change resulting from the impact of GTAs are difficult to capture (such as changes in social norms or improvements in the quality of life as a result of greater gender equality in the home) or where the links with the impact of GTAs are less obvious (for example, GTAs make rural finance or value chain projects more effective by contributing to stronger, more resilient and sustainable livelihood systems). As noted earlier, there are several initiatives underway to broaden and strengthen monitoring and impact systems.
- **Finance:** many GTA initiatives are constrained by limited funds or the lack of certainty regarding long-term funding. Increased understanding of the importance and relevance of GTAs by project staff and management is critical to secure appropriate levels of funding.

Other challenges encountered include misunderstandings about the need for self-reliance and the minimum level of support (e.g. financial support) that will be provided to participants; ensuring women who emerge as leaders in producer organizations are not exposed to the risk of failure or take on too much responsibility for change alone; and working with co-wives in polygamous families.

# 3. Concluding remarks

The analysis of the 15 GTAs presented in this compendium indicates several ways in which GTAs may be improved, and they should be considered during efforts to implement and/or upscale GTAs. These include the following:

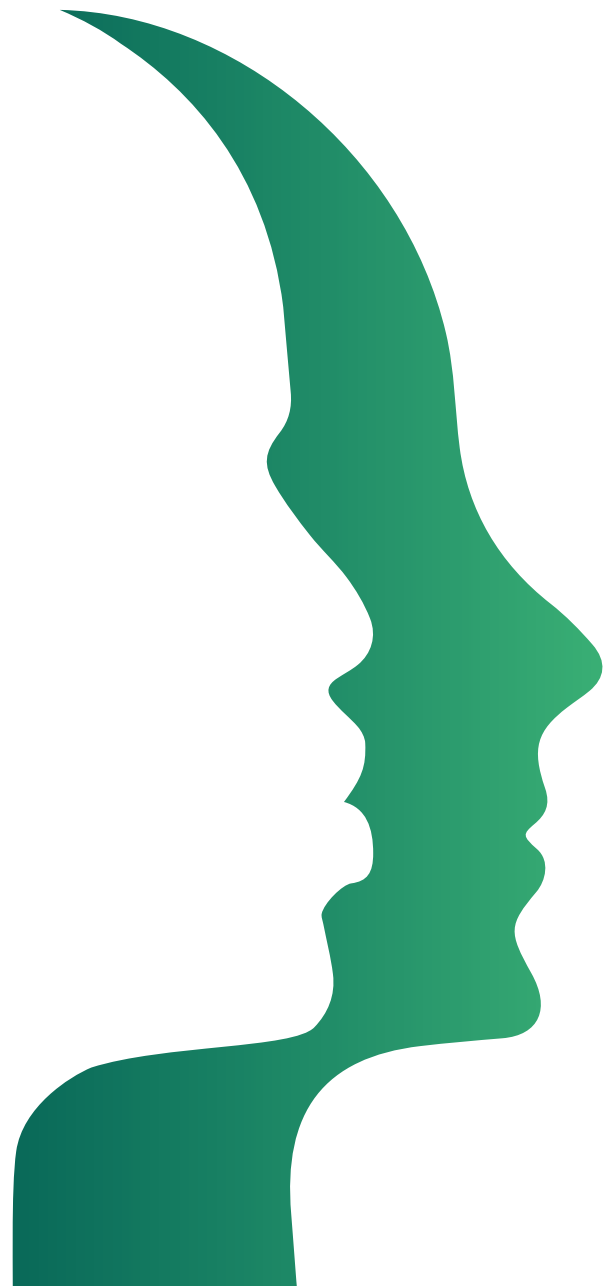
- Identify whether there is a minimum set of core domains of gender inequalities that must be addressed (such as more equitable intra-household workloads and shared decision-making) in order to bring about gender transformative change more quickly.
- Develop specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) indicators for monitoring and capturing the impacts at different levels (individual, household, community, institution, policies and laws).
- Develop GTA capacity at all levels, from project staff through to communities and government, underpinned by the formation of a network of accredited GTA experts (trainers and facilitators) to guarantee quality.
- Explore whether face-to-face encounters could be complemented by other channels to improve efficiency and impact, such as digital reinforcement.
- Draw on the experiences of other GTAs by sharing tools and approaches; for example, in Uganda, FFLS and Individual Household Mentoring have integrated GALS tools into their methodologies.
- Determine whether simple, low-cost complementary interventions are necessary to enable women and men to participate fully in GTA processes; for example, using labour-saving technologies to reduce domestic workloads, providing childcare during training sessions, enhancing access to information and communication technologies or providing functional adult literacy and numeracy classes.

A major challenge for all GTAs is how to take them to scale, whether it is upscaling within a region or country or replication in a new country setting. There are two specific issues: first, because GTAs do not represent the business-as-usual approach to development, it is necessary to convince management and staff, in lead agencies as well as development partners and communities, to allocate time and resources to these initiatives; and second, to ensure a sufficient pool of expertise on GTAs is available.

Many of the initiatives of the EU-RBA Joint Programme on Gender Transformative Approaches for Food Security and Nutrition (JP GTA) are designed to further the GTA cause. Experiences and lessons learned on GTAs will be shared to create awareness about the methodologies and benefits to be gained; manuals and guidance materials will be prepared and updated to document steps on implementation; skills will be developed and strengthened to implement GTAs and create a pool of good facilitators; a theory of change has been developed for GTAs in the context of food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture; and a robust monitoring, evaluation and learning framework will be developed in order to capture impacts at various levels, the results of which will be used for evidence-based dialogue and capitalization of good practices. This work will be supported, crucially, by capacity-strengthening activities to engage with staff and management from the RBAs on critical reflection and analysis for gender equality.

Part 2

# Fifteen good practices of gender transformative approaches







Family members show their GALS vision journey for gender equality and a better livelihood as part of a project by CAMKID and Oxfam in BOKEO Province Lao PDR

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# 1. Gender Action Learning System

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## SECTION 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

**Name of the methodology****Gender Action Learning System (GALS)****Countries with implementation experience**

- **East and Southern Africa:** Burundi, Comoros, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
- **West and Central Africa:** Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone
- **Central and South Asia:** Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan
- **South East Asia:** Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Viet Nam
- **Pacific:** Papua New Guinea

**Start/end date**

2008 – ongoing

**Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology**

GALS has been developed under the Oxfam Novib Women's Empowerment Mainstreaming and Networking (WEMAN) Programme with local partners and Linda Mayoux. The use of GALS in value chain development was piloted by Oxfam Novib and partners in Uganda through a small grant from IFAD (2009–2011). It was rolled out by Oxfam Novib with local partners in Nigeria, Rwanda and Uganda with the support of a large grant from IFAD (2011–2014) and in other countries with cofunding from other donors.

Building on the experience with Oxfam Novib, a total of 51 ongoing IFAD-supported projects across 26 countries have some activities related to household methodologies (GALS being the most widely used and innovative household methodology), 37 of which are currently under implementation. They are most commonly found in projects working on value chains, agribusiness and enterprise development, agriculture and rural finance. GALS is also being used in the context of nutrition, youth engagement and climate change.

Other organizations that have worked with GALS include Hivos, Twin and Twin Trading, and SNV Ethiopia.

**Purpose of the methodology and the domains of gender inequality that are addressed**

The purpose of the GALS methodology is to enable women and men to gain more control over their lives, and catalyse and support a sustainable movement for gender justice. GALS promotes equality in rights and opportunities by:

- equipping women and men to develop individual visions for change that have achievable targets and road maps to move towards these visions; are based on analysis of their current situation, past achievements and opportunities/strengths and challenges; and are often aggregated into household visions;
- empowering the most vulnerable women and men to develop, negotiate, implement and monitor their own plans for improving productivity, raising the quality of produce, increasing incomes, reducing livelihood risks and increasing gender equality within households;
- bringing about significant changes in property rights, gender-based violence, participation in economic decision making and the performance of unpaid care and domestic work; and
- engaging with and gaining commitment of more powerful private-sector actors at the local and national levels to develop win-win strategies for value chain development that address gender issues and promote inclusion of the most vulnerable.

GALS is not a single methodology or set of tools. It is a change philosophy based on underlying principles of social and gender justice, inclusion and mutual respect. In particular, it promotes women's human rights based on the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

### Contribution of the methodology to wider development/organizational/project goals

The methodology aims at generating pro-poor wealth by addressing unequal gender and social relations, which are key constraints to achieving development goals. A key focus is breaking through gender-based barriers at the individual level and changing gender inequalities within the family, as these are the challenges that prevent both women and men from achieving their vision for gender equality and sustainable livelihoods.

GALS can be used in many different thematic areas of work including rural finance, value chain development, smallholder agriculture, rural enterprise development and community development. Consequently, GALS links directly to specific project objectives. The GALS process also facilitates project implementation by enhancing ownership of project activities by the target groups (i.e. women, men and youth), and the participatory design and monitoring of project interventions.

### Target group

The target group consists of extremely poor and food insecure women and men, including:

- smallholder farmers;
- young people, particularly unemployed youth;
- small-scale and micro entrepreneurs;
- people living with disabilities; and
- different community-based groups, depending on the nature of the project.

The poverty diamond tool for poverty ranking and profiling is used with the community to develop the targeting criteria.

## SECTION 2

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

### Key entry points for applying the methodology

GALS is used at multiple levels:

- individual: for individual life planning and strengthening agency;
- household: for changing gender and power relations;
- group and community: for collective action to change gender relations and norms, improve livelihoods and engage in policy advocacy;
- multi-stakeholder (e.g. in value chains): to create mutual respect, collaboration, equality and participatory decision making); and
- the private sector.

Entry points are often already existing community-based groups (e.g. producer organizations, local business associations, natural resource associations, village-level savings and credit groups) and private sector companies.

GALS is designed to be used at project/programme level. It is not primarily intended for organizational change processes. However, many of the tools of GALS can be adjusted and used at organizational levels by private sector groups and implementing partners for specific purposes.

### Implementing partners

The implementing partners vary according to the context and nature of the project.

Oxfam Novib and Hivos work through national and local civil society organizations.

In IFAD-supported projects, staff in the project management unit take the lead in overseeing the implementation of GALS activities, usually linking with the project line ministry responsible for agricultural extension, land and water development or community development.

Service providers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with a commitment to participatory development, human rights and gender equality may be hired to support GALS implementation at the community level. For example, GALS coordination committees comprising different stakeholders may be established at the district level to coordinate, monitor and support GALS community facilitators.



### Process of and criteria for selecting facilitators/champions/mentors

Community facilitators should have the following qualities:

- able to listen to others;
- willing to share their own process of change;
- open to learning from others;
- adept at communication;
- respectful of other people's views;
- proactive; and
- responsible for their actions.

Women and men from participating groups or communities who have already used GALS to change their situation 'emerge' as facilitators for others. Implementing organizations need to have the skill to recognize and support these change makers.

### Training of facilitators/champions/mentors

The initial training of trainers, who are usually staff from implementing partners, is provided during a five- to ten-day practical workshop led by an international GALS practitioner to ensure quality and correct understanding of the methodology. This is best done 'outside the classroom' with a pilot community. In these settings, staff learn more readily since poor people usually grasp the use of the visual diagramming tools quickly. Those who have learned GALS from or with the community are usually more successful in their role of supporting the community facilitators. They learn that they can step aside and give space to community members to do the training rather than perpetuate top-down systems of transferring knowledge. The international practitioner undertakes periodic follow-up visits, especially during the early stages, to backstop the trainers and facilitators, provide additional training, and support the adaptation of the GALS tools to local contexts, if necessary. Over time, the community facilitators build up their own network of peer facilitators, who emerge from their group members.

In some settings, a distinction is drawn between 'basic' GALS tools that focus on gender inequalities, and 'advanced' tools that address specific thematic areas, such as natural resource management or savings and financial inclusion.

## SECTION 3

## IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

### Key steps in the implementation cycle

GALS can be adjusted and applied in many ways. GALS as a gender transformative approach involves using the full methodology in a comprehensive and staged process that is embedded and linked with other activities and interventions across the project or programme. The steps outlined below are those used by Oxfam Novib. The approach is highly participatory. It operates by facilitating from the back, and making extensive use of visualization, role playing, songs and drama, all of which increase local ownership.

#### — Phase 1: Catalysing change and action

##### – Step 1: Adaptation workshop with representatives of the target groups and staff of the implementing partner(s)

Staff are introduced to GALS together with a majority of participants from marginalized communities. Community elders and leaders are also included, if manageable, to immediately start addressing power differences. The introduction is followed by capacity building for staff and implementing partners to demonstrate that gender injustice is a key cause of poverty and important to the men and women in the communities where they work. This strengthens their motivation and commitment to the process.

##### – Step 2: Change catalyst workshops in each of the pilot communities

Participants of the adaptation workshop implement what they have learned with their respective groups. Separate workshops can be held for young people.

- **Step 3: Individual life planning and community action learning** (approximately three to four months)

Participants and community facilitators introduce family members, peers and group members to the GALS tools, such as vision journeys, circle maps, trees and diamonds. These tools are used for (i) envisioning and planning change; (ii) analysing, negotiating and changing gender relations and norms; and (iii) monitoring change at the individual, household and collective levels. This process is done one step at a time. Participants then share these tools and the key gender principles with their family members and others. Participants give feedback on their experiences and are introduced to a new set of GALS tools, which they then share with their households and others.

This process continues with various tools, taking individuals, households and groups through the following steps:

- creating a long-term vision and time-bound milestones, including a business and livelihood vision, family and gender vision, and personal development vision;
- analysing and learning from past achievements, constraints and opportunities, and developing key action points;
- mapping opportunities and challenges, examining relationships, resources and power in the household and community, and developing key action points;
- sharing strategies and identifying possible solutions and actions that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) for individuals and groups;
- assessing the impact of achievements and addressing remaining issues; and
- aggregating activities at the household level to make a collective action strategy for the group.

Addressing the issues that are most immediately under peoples' own control at the outset forms the basis for identifying priorities and strategies for longer-term change in the wider community and institutions, and at macro levels.

Building on the behaviour change that they are able to make in their own lives, the participants in the community then train others on how to analyse the issues affecting them and to plan change. Thus, the change scales up through peer-to-peer training and sharing. The implementing partner catalyses and continuously enforces human rights in the peer-sharing process, and develops a localized GALS guide based on practice.

Key GALS tools include:

- Vision Journey: the basic GALS change planning framework where people plan how to achieve their vision, set SMART 'milestones', analyse opportunities and constraints, commit to actions and track progress over time.
- Gender Balance Tree: initiates discussion of gender issues and identifies action commitments.
- Empowerment Leadership Map: looks at the relationship network and opportunities for pyramid peer upscaling as the basis for subsequent collective action and gender justice mainstreaming.
- Challenge Action Tree: for exploring gender issues that arise (e.g. alcohol consumption) or other community issues.

- **Step 4: Participatory gender review (PGR)**

The purpose of the PGR is for participants to (i) appreciate the changes in livelihoods and gender relations; (ii) deepen their understanding of gender (in)equality and link to laws and conventions; and (iii) evaluate peer learning and map the way forward for scaling up.

At the end of the catalyst phase GALS is localized in the context and the project. There are pools of champions with stories of change who can train others, and there is a localized GALS guide.

## — Phase 2: GALS mainstreaming in interventions

During the mainstreaming phase, participatory decision-making and action learning are integrated into groups, interventions, decision spaces and organizations. In parallel, a more advanced use of participatory tools and processes is introduced. The steps depend on the thematic focus. Below is a summary example for GALS mainstreaming in value chain development.



- **Step 1: Mapping and scoping**

Based on the PGR, a coordination team is formed for scaling up GALS. Value chain analysis is done to mobilize marginalized stakeholders and address issues of unpaid labour and invisible contributions, and the complexity of livelihoods of the marginalized households involved.

- **Step 2: Negotiating the win-win**

Participatory market research enables marginalized value chain stakeholders to define their offers to and requests from powerful actors. This is followed by events between farmers, traders, buyers, input dealers and service providers to identify win-win strategies to collaborate on gender, production and marketing issues. Multi-stakeholder platforms are established for regular review and planning meetings to support collaboration that is based on equality, respect and mutually advantageous relationships.

- **Phase 3: Movement building**

The movement building phase of GALS is still under development. It aims to create a movement for gender equality for networking and advocacy, to influence policies and decision-making processes at higher levels.

### Average length of the implementation cycle

- Catalyst phase: approximately six months
- Mainstreaming phase: one to three years, depending on the scope
- Movement building phase: parallel to mainstreaming phase, period not yet defined.

### Graduation from the methodology

The community-based organizations usually develop a simple mechanism for graduating GALS ‘champions’ who have successfully applied GALS in their own lives and have influenced others to change. GALS champions who have skills in creating cohesion and are trusted by community members, voluntarily reach out to others close to them. The implementing organization also involves them in training people in other communities. Individuals ‘graduate’ when they have the ability to comprehend and apply the tools in their daily lives and their businesses.

## SECTION 4

## MONITORING

### Monitoring system

- **Internal by participants**

GALS fosters community participatory reviews and impact assessments on livelihood improvement, with a focus on poverty and gender issues. The GALS participants and groups develop a culture of ongoing monitoring. They document change through visual tools, which also provide a baseline to assess change. Progress is systematically tracked, first at the individual level for individual learning and further progress, and then shared and quantified at the group level for mutual support and exchanging experiences. Selected information is then aggregated and analysed by the group/organization and supplemented by a more qualitative investigation of issues that have arisen. Communities also use the information to track peer learning. The PGR is offered as a community-led monitoring and evaluation method.

- **External**

The project monitoring and evaluation unit consolidates quantitative and qualitative outputs and outcomes across the project. Ideally the information is verified externally. Qualitative documentation can be linked to a project’s communication and advocacy strategy. For documentation and learning purposes, staff members develop success stories and profiles. Social media networks can be used to collect, share and give support to the participants and staff by the GALS expert.

### Indicators

Indicators are developed by the participants using GALS tools, including the poverty diamond and identity diamond, gender balance tree, income tree, challenge action tree and empowerment map.

### — Quantitative

Number of women, men and youth engaging in GALS and changing behaviour in different areas, for example:

- Division of labour among household members
- Income generation and control over income by women and men
- Property/assets ownership by women and men
- Reduction in domestic violence
- Diversification of livelihoods
- Number of children being sent to school and payment of fees
- Participation of women in decision making in the home, producer groups, community and value chain platforms
- Participation of women in accessing project and other services

### — Qualitative

Stories of change from participants, household members, members of the community and private sector companies, backed by photographic records demonstrating key aspects of change.

## SECTION 5

## BUDGET

### Main items of expenditure

- Field-based exposure and workshops for the different steps and phases
- Fees of GALS experts and staff contributions
- Peer exchanges between champions
- Exchange visits between communities
- Development of localized guide and documentation of stories
- Review meetings

In some contexts, the private sector bears the costs of training the champions and staff.

### Total budget

The budget depends on the targeted outreach numbers, the number of local organizations targeted, the phases chosen, and the pre-existing experience with gender, social inclusion and participatory approaches.

## SECTION 6

## RESULTS

### Number of beneficiaries reached

Oxfam and Hivos estimate that as part of their projects with civil society partners, more than 200 000 women and men, mainly in Africa and Asia, have already used the GALS methodology to improve their livelihoods and change gender relations.

### Main changes attributed to the methodology

GALS brings about powerful, positive changes in gender and social norms and relations for both men and women, including youth, at the household and group levels.

- There is increased awareness and understanding about the underlying causes of gender inequality and their negative impacts on productivity, and individual and household well-being.
- Community members are equipped with practical tools to analyse and drive changes in their households and their communities for gender equality and sustainable livelihoods.
- A direct relationship has been found between behaviour change at the household level and livelihood improvement, including higher productivity; better access to services and markets; increases in household assets (e.g. livestock, cattle, bicycles, motorcycles, farm equipment, radios and home improvements); improved food and nutrition security; increased investments in education for boys and girls; and a reduction in the number of food-insecure months. Increased incomes and savings are used to rent land for farming, hire casual farm labour, buy improved seeds and boost small trade.

- Key areas of change that make this possible include reduced alcohol abuse, gambling and domestic violence; and men taking up domestic chores (e.g. fetching water and firewood, and cooking food), which reduces women’s workload and enables them to spend more time on business or leisure.
- Within families, women can openly discuss key issues with men, such as family planning, and make decisions about expenditures and new enterprises. Women also take up leadership positions and increasingly acquire, own and control property. Young people can become more motivated by seeing a positive future for themselves. Planning and tracking income and expenditure flows and the use of resources is important for the poorest households to cope better during long periods of food insecurity and other crises.
- The common visions developed at the group and cooperative levels lead to collective businesses, stronger community organizations and better links with buyers and input suppliers.
- In the workplace, GALS contributes to achieving the fair and equitable treatment of the labour force, and overcoming the marginalization of female workers.

In addition, the communication, analytical and participatory skills of staff from the project and implementing partners are strengthened, which enables them to work better with women and men from poor households.

### Key success factors and strengths of the methodology

The key elements responsible for the successes of the methodology are:

- GALS ensures social justice is non-negotiable.
- GALS enables a deeper level of analysis to demonstrate links between gender-based constraints and poverty reduction/wealth creation for both women and men, which results in positive change in sensitive gender-related behaviours and norms that are often considered to be unchangeable.
- The vision journey motivates women and men to gather information, analyse it and then look for solutions by developing their own objectives and strategies. Motivation is created by undertaking action from day one and seeing that some change can happen quickly, as well as in the longer term.
- Starting with an analysis of personal life dynamics helps people realize that they are part of the solution to any challenge they may be facing and that benefits that can be reaped by all if the negative impacts of gender inequalities are addressed.
- GALS facilitation, known as ‘facilitating from the back’, gives everyone the space to explore, contribute to and develop their own plans of change.
- Constructive communication at the household, group, enterprise and community levels is improved by facilitating dialogue and using practical approaches based on visual tools that can be adapted to different contexts. The pictorial tools help clarify thoughts and concepts, and ground visions in reality.
- Moving from individual to collective actions can become a strong voice to advocate for addressing local issues.
- When GALS is applied at the level of producer organization, as well as with individual members, there are shared interests in improving the productivity of the value chain and the quality of produce to help everyone achieve their visions.
- Rather than perpetuating existing power structures, giving support to new leaders emerging from the vulnerable participants enables behaviour change and livelihoods improvement to scale up quickly.
- Peer mentoring is driven by the enthusiasm of champions to share the GALS tools because of the profound life-changing experiences they have experienced themselves.
- Creating a pyramid outreach network by community facilitators through peer sharing and learning in their communities and associations develops a community-level movement to change gender norms.
- Organizing learning events in a country fosters peer learning and motivates community facilitators and GALS champions.

### Challenges and measures to overcome them

- To have an impact, the mindset of extension staff needs to shift from ‘sensitization’ and ‘teaching’, to facilitating a community-led empowerment process.
- When engaging with private-sector stakeholders to negotiate win-win strategies, addressing gender issues can slip off the agenda if not well facilitated.
- Buy-in from project staff to mainstream the GALS methodology in existing work requires creativity to adapt to the priorities and pace of participating communities.
- There is a need to develop comprehensive and continuous follow-up at the project level.
- Inadequate resource allocation to GALS-related activities in project design and annual workplan and budgets is a challenge that can be addressed by conducting basic GALS awareness sessions for staff from various project components.
- There can be an initial reluctance among community members to address ‘gender’ and engage through drawing.
- A reliance on GALS champions to work as volunteers in supporting the sharing process among peers can be recognized through certificates that provide added motivation.

### Potential for upscaling

- If well facilitated and structured (and if the socio-political context allows it), peer scaling up happens spontaneously, with little effort required from organizations beyond monitoring and ensuring that the gender and human rights’ perspectives are not lost.
- Pyramid sharing is an integral part of the GALS process. Each champion is a catalyst for upscaling. They can start with ‘easy people’ to work with, track their own progress, brainstorm on further ways of upscaling and identify ways of working with those who are more difficult to reach.
- Requirements to support upscaling include buy-in from government, donors, private sector and implementing agencies.
- Developing an international network of GALS practitioners and South-South events across Africa has been a powerful way for exchanging information and fostering peer learning among practitioners.

### Potential for replication

- **Key enablers**
  - Choose an appropriate entry point
  - Invest in facilitation skills to create a pool of good facilitators
  - Support GALS champions (a key resource is the community member who has grasped the methodology and can support other individuals and groups as they go through the process of change)
  - Embed GALS within relevant organizations (e.g. local governments, farmer organizations, private sector actors, donors)
  - Challenge hierarchies in organizations and power relations between marginalized women and men and development professionals

### Sustainability of the methodology once project/external input is complete

- Once the benefits to be gained from using GALS have been demonstrated, groups often pay allowances to community facilitators from their own resources.
- The integration of GALS into project activities strengthens the culture of long-term planning and visioning in the areas of business and livelihoods development, family and gender, and personal development.
- Uptake by local governments and businesses improves their planning and supply chains.

## SECTION 7

## RESOURCES

**Publications**

- Mayoux, L. and Oxfam Novib (2014) *GALS Phase 1 manual*  
[https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/Redactie/Downloads/English/publications/140701\\_RRDD\\_manual\\_July\\_small\(1\).pdf](https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/Redactie/Downloads/English/publications/140701_RRDD_manual_July_small(1).pdf)
- Reemer, T. and Makanza, M. (2014) *Practical Guide For Transforming Gender And Unequal Power Relations In Value Chains, Oxfam Novib*  
[https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/Redactie/Downloads/English/publications/150115\\_Practical%20guide%20GALS%20summary%20Phase%201-2%20lr.pdf](https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/Redactie/Downloads/English/publications/150115_Practical%20guide%20GALS%20summary%20Phase%201-2%20lr.pdf)
- Bishop, C. (2019) *Stocktake of the use of household methodologies in IFAD's portfolio*, Rome, IFAD  
[https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/41377902/hhm\\_stocktake.pdf/d64f0301-19d5-b210-3ace-765ba0b5f527](https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/41377902/hhm_stocktake.pdf/d64f0301-19d5-b210-3ace-765ba0b5f527)

**Websites**

- GAMEchange Network website  
<https://gamechangenetwork.org/>
- GAMEchange Network on Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/GAMEchangeNetwork/>
- Oxfam Novib website  
[www.oxfamnovib.nl/weman](http://www.oxfamnovib.nl/weman)





Young change agent couple  
and their family. Mityana

©Andrew Marikovich

## 2. Gender Household Approach

PREPARED BY

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## SECTION 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

**Name of the methodology****Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (HRNS) Gender Household Approach****Countries with implementation experience**

- **East Africa:** Ethiopia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania
- **West Africa:** Côte d'Ivoire

**Start/end date**

2010 – ongoing

**Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology**

The non-profit foundation Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (HRNS) was established by Michael R. Neumann and his family as an independent organization in 2005.

The implementation of the HRNS Gender Household Approach has been supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Agricultural Business Initiative Trust, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and International Coffee Partners (ICP).

**Purpose of the methodology and the domains of gender inequality that are addressed**

The purpose of the methodology is to promote farming as a family business. In implementing the HRNS Gender Household Approach, the main objectives include: joint decision making and planning in smallholder farming households; the active participation of women in training activities, and the inclusion of women in leadership positions in farmer organizations.

The approach addresses key domains of gender inequality including:

- unequal decision making within the household and communities;
- uneven access to and control over resources;
- imbalanced labour distribution;
- low levels of participation by women in trainings and skill development;
- low levels of participation by women in the leadership of farmer organizations; and
- lack of role models for youth.

**Contribution of the methodology to wider development/organizational/project goals**

HRNS implements hands-on projects to improve the working and living conditions of smallholder farming families and enhance their economic and social development. Sustainable practices and the responsible use of natural resources are also promoted together with strategies to adapt to climate change. This is done through farmer field schools linked to producer organizations that are set up with support from HRNS. These objectives cannot be achieved if there are gender inequalities in households and within farmers groups.

The HRNS Gender Household Approach plays a key role in addressing the gender inequalities at the household level. Households make plans and decisions jointly on the use of their income. This enhances the profitability of household farming, improves livelihoods and strengthens resilience to climate changes or market shocks. The HRNS Gender Household Approach is not a stand-alone intervention. It is integrated into initiatives to improve livelihoods through farmer training on good agricultural practices and the establishment of professional farmer organizations.

**Target group**

The approach targets couples from smallholder coffee farming households who are members of producer organizations. It has also been successfully implemented in interventions that target youth.

## SECTION 2

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

**Key entry points for applying the methodology**

HRNS supports the setting up of producer organizations at the village level. They then form cooperatives, each comprising approximately 20 producer organizations.

There are three entry point for this intervention.

- At the household level, interventions target smallholder couples who are members of producer organizations through couples' seminars.
- At the community level, interventions provide sensitization through dialogue and drama shows.
- In farmer organizations, interventions work specifically with the leadership of cooperatives to address gender inequalities and increase female representation.

In addition, individual women are identified to participate in leadership training. These women already hold leadership positions in producer organizations or cooperatives, or are considered to be female 'change agents', and actively participate in farmer field school sessions.

**Implementing partners**

HRNS has local offices in Ethiopia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda that implement the HRNS Gender Household Approach.

**Process of and criteria for selecting facilitators/champions/mentors**

Champions (couples), who are referred to as 'change agents', are selected from the membership of the producer organization. After participating in a couples' seminar, two couples from each producer organization are chosen for further training, monitoring and support in their journey to improved joint household planning and decision making. The couples either volunteer or are selected randomly.

**Training of facilitators/champions/mentors**

Once a couple has been selected to become a change agent, they participate in change agent training. Topics include visioning, planning, joint decision making, counselling, conducting household visits, and the roles and responsibilities of change agents.

This is followed by project staff visiting each change agent's household to support them in developing their household visions and plans. Refresher sessions are conducted during self-assessment meetings.

They receive regular coaching and mentoring from the project's gender officer and/or farmer field school facilitators in order to support other households to overcome gendered inequalities.



## SECTION 3

## IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

**Key steps in the implementation cycle****— Step 1: Conducting a gender analysis to understand the gender issues in the area, develop suitable strategies and align tools**

The gender analysis is usually carried out by the in-house HRNS gender expert who is familiar with this work and has introduced the approach in several countries.

**— Step 2: Training project staff and management**

The training on gender awareness raising and the HRNS Gender Household Approach enhances the competences of the implementing organization and project staff and management to effectively implement the approach. This training is followed by continued support and additional coaching for field staff of the implementing organization (HRNS).

**— Step 3: Introducing the HRNS Gender Household Approach to leaders of farmer organizations, producer organizations and cooperatives and afterwards to producer organizations at the village level in order to engage and work with coffee farming households**

Sensitization meetings are held at the cooperatives to address gender inequalities in leadership structures and support the implementation of the approach. Leaders of farmer organizations are encouraged to introduce criteria for the registration of members that promote gender equality (e.g. not only registering the household head who is usually a man but also the spouse; scheduling meetings at times that are favourable for female and male members; and including women in their leadership).

**— Step 4: Conducting couples' seminars** (three to five hours)

Couples' seminars, which are conducted with members of the producer organization, form the building block of the approach. Members are encouraged to come with their spouse. Participants identify existing inequalities by creating activity profiles and control matrices. They then jointly decide on potential actions to address these inequalities together. The training is facilitated by the project's gender officer. At the end of the seminar programme, two change agent couples are identified for each producer organization.

**— Step 5: Training change agents** (five to six hours)

This step involves intensive coaching for the selected couples and is facilitated by the project's gender officer. Change agents receive support on household visioning and planning through regular training, individual household visits and coaching.

**— Step 6: Outreach by change agents**

The change agents play a strong role in sensitizing fellow members of their producer organization by sharing their own experiences. It is envisaged that each change agent couple will engage with at least 10 households for 18 months after the couples' seminar. They meet all households in a farmer field school every month and individual households at least once in every quarter.

**— Step 7: Training women in leadership and business development** (three to five hours)

Specific coaching is provided for women whose households are registered with the producer organization where the couples' seminars have been conducted. Female change agents are also encouraged to participate. The training, which is delivered by project staff, covers aspects of active participation, decision making and entrepreneurship.

**— Step 8: Sensitizing the community**

Change agents become role models in their community and expand their reach. They form drama groups and organize community discussions about the benefits of joint household management.

### Average length of the implementation cycle

A project cycle may last from 36 to 48 months. However, changes begin to be observed after about 18 months from the first couples' seminar in a producer organization.

### Graduation from the methodology

There is no official graduation system. However, the target has been reached if 60% of the couples from the producer organization have:

- attended a couples' seminar;
- attended at least nine of the monthly farmer field school sessions, or 50% of the producer organization/farmer field school meetings within the last 18 months; and
- received at least one household visit by a change agent, farmer field school facilitator or the project's gender officer.

## SECTION 4

## MONITORING

### Monitoring system

- Bi-annual self-assessment exercise for change agents
- Annual progressive survey, individual gender survey, gender ratio in meetings and training activities
- Randomized control trials in Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania
- Indicators
- Number of women attending trainings
- Number of women in leadership positions (if elections are held during implementation cycle)

## SECTION 5

## BUDGET

### Main items of expenditure

- Staff training
- Couple seminars
- Meetings with leaders of farmer organizations
- Training activities for change agents
- Follow-up household visits
- Women leadership training activities
- Drama shows
- Gender surveys and assessments

### Total budget

Not available

## SECTION 6

## RESULTS

**Number of beneficiaries reached**

- Uganda: 17 000 households
- United Republic of Tanzania: 6 000 households
- Ethiopia: 2 500 households
- Côte d'Ivoire: 1 500 households

**Main changes attributed to the methodology****— Gender-related changes**

- Overall increased collaboration and harmony within households
- Increased joint decision making within households, including joint decisions regarding investments (e.g. the purchase of inputs) or where to sell their coffee
- Increased joint planning on how to use the earnings from coffee production
- Stronger participation by women in farmer organizations, in terms of their participation in meetings or the number of leadership positions occupied by women
- Increased participation of women in farmer field school sessions
- Women's workload has reduced significantly, and women are able to engage in other productive activities (e.g. running a restaurant or opening their own shop). This diversifies family incomes and increases the family's resilience to external shocks.

**— Other changes**

- With increased participation of women and other household members in farmer field school sessions, there is a greater rate of adoption of good agricultural practices, which results in higher quality produce and larger yields.
- Through improved transparency and sharing of benefits, side selling is reduced as individual household members no longer feel the need to 'steal the coffee' from their own production. This benefits the producer organization because more coffee is being bulked.

**Key success factors and strengths of the methodology**

- Transparency and joint planning and decision making are critical for household development.
- The whole household is addressed, both at farmer field school sessions and during the household visits.
- The HRNS Gender Household Approach brings to light other challenges faced within coffee farming households (e.g. HIV and AIDS, and domestic violence).
- The approach reaches out to married women in households and increases their participation in coffee value chain training activities.
- In male-dominated value chains such as coffee, the HRNS Gender Household Approach, because it is non-confrontational, minimizes resistance to changing the social norms and cultural beliefs that limit the voice of women in their own households and communities.
- Drama is an effective communication tool for rural communities as it entertains and engages the audience while they learn.
- The HRNS Gender Household Approach improves cooperation in the home and leads to the better management of household resources, which helps the household progress economically at a faster rate.
- Joint household and financial planning reduce side selling of coffee and improves household savings and business performance.
- The couple's membership in welfare groups and savings and loans groups strengthens these groups and improves the couple's household savings.
- Change agents have received intensive coaching and remain as resources in their producer organizations and continue to act as role models in the community.
- The approach is adaptable to different cultural and geographical contexts.

### Challenges and measures to overcome them

- Skepticism from farmers who were opposed to changing their deep-rooted cultural beliefs and practices.
  - Select couples that exhibit signs of positive change in their relationship and use them as role models.
- Households require constant follow up, and consequently, resources
  - Involve farmer organization structures in following up on household developments.
- Motivation of change agents to continue
  - Change agents work on a voluntary basis. They are offered various incentives, for example going on farmer exchange and exposure visits; hosting demonstration plots and obtaining agro-inputs (e.g. fertilizer); receiving intense coaching from project staff; and gaining recognition during meetings.
- Many issues are brought up during household visits that need to be addressed including marital strife, land disputes, health-related issues (e.g. HIV and AIDS) and child welfare concerns
  - Links are established with relevant stakeholders and development organizations.
- Addressing polygamous households and monogamous households equally
  - Men started to apply the joint planning and decision making with one wife, and their other wives joined later, having witnessed the improvements in their co-wives' households.
- Working with couples when one partner is not available or is unwilling to participate
  - The couple is replaced as they are unable to carry out the role model function.

### Potential for upscaling

- **Requirements to support upscaling**
  - Resources are needed to mainstream the HRNS Gender Household Approach into the livelihood approach and ensure that it is an integrated activity.
  - Gender issues need to be addressed from the outset.
- **Potential improvements to be introduced in the approach**
  - Increase transparency over coffee sales (e.g. by informing both husband and wife about the amount of coffee sent to auction) and the cash earned (e.g. through SMS or receipts signed by both spouses)
  - Free up more time for women so that they can participate in coffee farming, decision making and trainings (e.g. through labour-saving technologies such as efficient stoves, water harvesting, the provision of childcare during trainings, the convenient scheduling of trainings)
  - Integrate masculinity workshop for men
  - Incorporate a step-by-step approach to strengthen overall household resilience (e.g. income generation, climate change adaptation, sanitation, food and income security).

### Potential for replication

The HRNS Gender Household Approach work started in Uganda and is successfully being applied in Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and the United Republic of Tanzania. It was adapted and implemented in the tri-border of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Currently it is being introduced to smallholder coffee farming communities in Indonesia.

### Sustainability of the methodology once project/external input is complete

- The use of change agents who are members within existing farmer organizations enhances the sustainability of the approach.
- Training and orientation of cooperative leadership on the approach strengthens their buy-in and the promotion of gender equality both at the household and institutional levels.

**SECTION 7****RESOURCES****Publications**

- Confronting the wall of patriarchy: Does participatory intra-household decision-making empower women in agricultural households?  
<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/research-groups/iob/publications/working-papers/wp-2017/wp-201713/>
- Improving intra-household cooperation for efficient smallholder farming. A field experiment in central Uganda  
<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/research-groups/iob/publications/working-papers/wp-2018/wp-201807/>
- Joint forces – The impact of intra-household cooperation on welfare in East African agricultural households  
<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/research-groups/iob/publications/working-papers/wp-2018/wp-201811/>

**Videos**

- Improving Gender Relations in Coffee-Farming Households – Full Version (17 minutes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuPspJZu230>
- Improving Gender Relations in Coffee-Farming Households – Trailer (3 minutes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuL3tH9iYn4>





Osman and Baindu are from  
Taninihun Village in Tunkia  
Chiefdom in Kenema District

©SEND/Joseph Ayamga

# 3. Gender Model Family

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## SECTION 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

**Name of the methodology****Gender Model Family (GMF)****Countries with implementation experience****West Africa:** Ghana, Sierra Leone**Start/end date**

April 2019 – March 2024

**Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology**

Social Enterprise Development Foundation (SEND) International is an interdenominational organization. SEND Ghana (SG) and SEND Sierra Leone (SSL) are the GMF promoters in West Africa.

SG conceptualized the GMF model during the period 2001–2003 to address the issue of inequitable access to and control over project resources and benefits. Following a strong backlash from husbands who felt excluded from a revolving fund that was established to enable women to rehabilitate their livelihoods, SEND concluded that livelihood and food security projects would not be sustainable unless they started from a foundation of gender equity within the household. The methodology was pioneered in the Northern Region of Ghana with support from Global Affairs Canada and Co-operative Development Foundation (CDF).

In 2010, SG supported SSL to initiate GMF programming in Sierra Leone.

**Purpose of the methodology and the domains of gender inequality that are addressed**

GMF is a gender transformative approach that enables married men and women (couples, partners) to address unequal power relations and decision making about household resources. GMFs use their positive experiences – especially the benefits gained by women, men, boys and girls of the household – to champion and advocate for gender equality in their communities.

**Contribution of the methodology to wider development/organizational/project goals**

SEND is committed to addressing unequal gender relations at its roots. SEND has been challenged not just to provide gender awareness training to its farm families but to engage them in a transformative process in which they commit to gender transformation because it is the path to development. As GMFs, women and men are empowered together to benefit from development projects and activities. The GMF programme has strengthened SEND's ability in Ghana and Sierra Leone to achieve interventions with specific development objectives in: peace animation; nutrition education; climate-smart farming practices; women's literacy; women in leadership; farmer cooperatives; women's organizations; microfinance and small-scale enterprise development; water, sanitation and hygiene; women in governance; and small ruminant farming.

**Target group**

GMF target groups include men and women who belong to:

- farm families,
- rural commercial women's associations,
- village saving and loan associations,
- credit unions,
- family-based farmer cooperatives,
- members of women groups and
- peace animation groups.

## SECTION 2

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

**Key entry points for applying the methodology**

The entry point are different groups (cooperatives, associations, networks) formed for development activities. Group meetings are used to introduce, mobilize and recruit GMFs. Effective contexts include a variety of development programmes and projects involving food and nutrition security; water, sanitation and hygiene; women and small-scale enterprise development; small ruminant rearing; and local resource mobilization.

**Implementing partners**

SEND has partnered with CDF in Ghana, and in Sierra Leone with Welthungerhilfe, Irish Aid, Christian Aid and Solidaridad West Africa.

The Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) is supporting SSL as a knowledge partner on the links between women's empowerment and food and nutrition security. KIT has provided inputs to the baseline design, qualitative tools for action-learning about gender transformation and technical support for the analysis and roll-out of key findings.

**Process of and criteria for selecting facilitators/champions/mentors****— Facilitators**

GMF facilitators are staff from the implementing organization. They should be models themselves – gender-sensitive, respectful and respected, approachable and patient. They should understand gender concepts and issues within the community, be good communicators and listeners, have good facilitation skills, be able to manage and resolve conflict, and know the community dynamics, culture and language. Their role is to orient men and women who belong to groups in GMF and train couples in the GMF methodology. Community members appreciate the personal experiences of the facilitators. They are responsible for community sensitization, recruitment, training, monitoring and supervising the GMFs.

**— GMFs**

A GMF is made up of a husband, wife and their children who want to be a model for change and transformation in society by challenging traditional notions of gender roles and responsibilities. A GMF believes that:

- Their lives will be transformed by their efforts to share labour, resources and decision making, and promote gender equity.
- Each member of the family has equal rights and thus is entitled to opportunities to become empowered. Empowerment means that men and women together can take control and improve their lives, and that neither the man nor the woman exerts power over the other. They make decisions together, and share resources and their benefits.
- Anyone in the family can help with cooking and cleaning, running a business or making financial decisions.
- Everyone in the family should have access to and control over resources, including education, which will help them to improve how they make decisions and direct their lives.

Selection criteria for a GMF include:

- married;
- stable residents in the community;
- husband and wife are both committed to be trained with other families;
- husband or wife, or both, should be a participant in a development project;
- committed and ready to learn and change;
- willing to share their experiences within and outside their communities; and
- willing to mobilise other families to become GMFs (at least three new families after their first year acting as GMF).

Once married couples have volunteered to become GMFs, they undertake a training programme in several phases, and commit to regular meetings with other GMFs and members of their community.

Some GMFs are selected by other GMFs to be leaders or champions in their community. They support the GMF facilitators to monitor and support their colleague GMFs. They are not paid but might be given reward like a photo of the family as a sign of appreciation. They are role models for the success of the GMF process and lead in sharing experiences within their community.

### Training of facilitators/champions/mentors

Experienced staff from the implementing organization who are familiar with the GMF model conduct a training of trainers of the GMF facilitators using the GMF Manual for Community Workers. They ensure there are an equal number of men and women facilitators who understand local gender issues and can discuss them in the local language.

The GMF facilitators are responsible for facilitating two training workshops of two days each with the GMFs, following the GMF Manual for Community Workers.

## SECTION 3

## IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

### Key steps in the implementation cycle

The GMF training programme follows seven steps.

#### — Step 1: Preparing communities for the GMF programme

This step identifies couples (husband and wife) to volunteer to become GMFs. The GMF facilitators use project meetings or group meetings to inform community members about the benefits of being a GMF. The experiences of previous projects are used to illustrate the benefits.

#### — Step 2: Recruitment and registration of GMFs

Community members are given time to consider whether they want to volunteer to participate in the GMF programme. GMF facilitators visit each community to register those who are interested. If the interested families exceed ten, then they split into two groups and each group will select a GMF leader or champion from amongst the GMFs. The facilitators then work with the community GMF champions to plan and conduct the training.

#### — Step 3: First training of GMFs

The first training (two days) is organized for between 10 to 12 couples who have volunteered to become GMFs. It is conducted by the GMF facilitator, and both husbands and wives should attend together. Its main purpose is to enable couples to draw up their action plans for being GMFs. The training uses the Harvard tools for Gender Analysis: daily activity profile, triple roles identification, and access and control profile. On the first day, the gender analysis exercises are accomplished in same-sex groups of men and women. The access and control profile is usually a turning point in men's and women's awareness of gender issues.

The Family Action Plan provides the impetus for gender transformation. Couples identify how to change patterns of gender roles and responsibilities with a focus on equitable sharing of household or reproductive work. Plans also reflect joint pledges by husbands and wives that both their sons and daughters will have equal opportunities, especially to education. Couples share their action plan with the group, which enables group members to hold each other accountable for the implementation of their action plans. The plan can also be used as a monitoring tool, allowing field officers can check to see whether the family is doing what they planned.

#### — Step 4: Second training of GMFs

The second training (two days) for couples is an opportunity for the GMF facilitator to follow up and clarify any misunderstanding of the GMF concepts, activities and expectations. This involves discussions about sharing household work, family planning, working in farming and business, controlling resources and decision making, parenting roles and care for children, and community management and leadership positions. Attention is also paid to any current problems or potential challenges that families have or will encounter in implementing their plans and meeting their commitments to each other.

#### — Step 5: Monitoring of GMFs

The GMF facilitator assesses and supports the implementation of the action plans. This usually starts a month after the first training when the GMFs hold their first monthly review meeting. The field officers are trained to use the gender monitoring tools in the training manual.

#### — Step 6: Monthly and quarterly meetings for experience sharing

Monthly meetings bring GMFs from the same community together to discuss their successes and challenges, and support each other. They are led by the GMF leader/champion and not attended by the GMF facilitator. Quarterly meetings bring GMFs from different communities together to share experiences. They are led by the GMF facilitator and usually held at the project office located in a district capital or chieftom head town. Interested community members can also be invited to observe and participate in the GMF experience sharing sessions. New GMFs and communities are identified for follow-up meetings and recruitment.

#### — Step 7: Experience sharing and Annual GMF Assembly

The Annual GMF Assembly brings together GMFs and other stakeholders. Political, youth, religious and traditional leaders, women and gender activists are invited to attend in order to increase the public profile and recognition of the GMF Assembly. GMFs advocate for gender equality by giving public testimony of behavioural changes and economic transformation experienced in their families. The media is invited to popularize the programme by highlighting its benefits. Successful model families are identified and celebrated at the GMF Assemblies for other families to learn from their experience.

### Average length of the implementation cycle

The implementation cycle is approximately one year.

- Sensitization stage – first meeting (Step 1)
- Recruitment – one week later (Step 2)
- First training – one week after recruitment (Step 3)
- Second training – six months later (Step 4)
- Monitoring – monthly and quarterly (Step 5)
- Monthly meetings (Step 6)
- Experience sharing – at end of 12 months (Step 7)

### Graduation from the methodology

There is no graduation in this model because becoming a GMF is a lifelong change process that has an impact on the family and the larger community. After a year, GMFs should have built their collective strength by organizing themselves with a champion and recruited at least three more GMFs. Staff inputs, such as GMF facilitator monitoring of the group, is scaled down. In Ghana, for example, a group of 10 GMFs is considered to have graduated once it produces a champion to lead it. After the year, the GMF champion will continue attending the quarterly review meetings until the project ends.

**SECTION 4****MONITORING****Monitoring system**

The monitoring system has three levels.

- Community Gender Mentors are GMF champions who have matured in the GMF process by supporting and sharing their experiences with others. They are responsible for regular monitoring and providing direct mentoring support to GMFs at the community level. Children are also asked to take part in the review meetings and assess if they see changes in the conduct of their parents and whether children are involved in decision-making processes.
- Zonal gender mentors are project staff who are present when a project covers many districts. They are responsible for training GMFs and monitoring the activities of community gender mentors within a geographical area.
- Project staff provide training of trainers for zonal gender mentors. They also monitor and mentor the community and zonal gender mentors.

At each of these levels, GMF best practices are documented and shared to promote learning.

**Indicators**

- **In Ghana**
  - Changes in the reproductive and productive roles in the family
  - Number of other household members that have heard about GMF
  - Women’s involvement in leadership and community management roles
  - Access to and control over productive resources by women in the family and community
  - Number of men who are fulfilling their commitments in the action plans
  - Number of monthly and quarterly experience sharing sessions held
- **In Sierra Leone**
  - Family unity (e.g. husband and wife not quarrelling regularly)
  - Conflict reduction
  - Joint businesses
  - Joint decision making in the family
  - Respect for each other and respect from community members due to the transformation
  - Improved family health status

**SECTION 5****BUDGET****Main items of expenditure**

Expenditure associated with:

- printing the training materials (e.g. the manual, GMF posters)
- GMF training in communities
- monitoring of the implementation of action plans
- experience sharing sessions
- annual assemblies
- logistical support for GMF champions and mentors.

**Total budget**

Not available

## SECTION 6

## RESULTS

**Number of beneficiaries reached**

In Ghana, 1 069 smallholder farm families were trained as GMFs under the FOSTERING project.

In Sierra Leone, approximately 58 437 GMFs have been formed, and they participate in delivering different projects of SSL and its partners

**Main changes attributed to the methodology**

The impacts of the GMF on the participating families and their communities include:

- There is a more equitable division of labour between family members, and the burden of work for women and girls is reduced.
- GMFs are better off financially. Men and women experience a greater capacity to earn money because they pool and share resources and labour more effectively.
- As men and women work together and consult each other, they recognize shared aspirations and their bonds become stronger. There is more openness and transparency within the family.
- Women experience greater ability to express themselves and have more control over resources, including their own labour and time. This creates space for more women to engage in productive activities to generate additional income.
- Women's confidence and self-esteem has increased because women and their roles are valued in the family and community.
- GMFs practice better parenting skills and recognize the importance for both girls and boys to be in school. Academic performance improves for boys and girls from GMFs.
- GMFs experience better health and nutrition status because men are willing to provide money for food, leave the best cuts of fish and meat for their children, and help their wives plan and prepare meals.
- Both men and women from GMFs are engaged in leadership positions. There is an increase of women in leadership positions in communities where there are groups of GMFs.
- In Ghana, the GMF programme has been adopted by some District Assemblies and a number of development partners, including Oxfam Ghana.
- Dissemination of information about GMFs has sparked interest in the programme by organizations in other countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire and Ethiopia.

**Key success factors and strengths of the methodology****— Locus for transformation**

The family is the unit for social transformation, where values for gender equality are instilled and principles for gender equity are developed. Intervening at the level of communities with families gets to the roots of gender inequality for effective gender transformation.

**— Identity in transformation**

GMFs have volunteered and pledged to be models for gender transformation. This sets them apart and draws the attention of other community members to the positive ways men and women can live together more equitably. They become role models that others wish to follow.

**— Action for transformation**

GMFs have concrete action plans for which they are accountable. GMFs start off with a plan to share household tasks. Building on the benefits of these actions, they also start sharing decisions and become strategic about how they can capitalize on shared household and productive labour and resources.

**— Collective transformation**

A community of 'change agents' is created because GMFs are supportive of each other and always mobilising others to become GMFs. With a critical mass of GMFs, gender transformation will change, not just within families, but throughout entire communities and societies.



#### — Sustained transformation

GMFs quickly experience the benefits from actively promoting gender equity. They rarely want to go back to the 'old' ways of living together because it would be seen as a step backwards in their progress toward a more developed and modern future in which both women and men are empowered by gender equality.

#### — Experience sharing sessions

Families are encouraged to share experiences with each other directly (i.e. man to man and woman to woman). This is especially important for sensitive topics. It also provides opportunities for people who are shy to speak in a group. In addition to helping GMFs to learn from each other, these sessions help to mobilize support among influential members of the communities for the GMF model.

#### — Low cost input

The GMFs are encouraged to rely on their own resources, including family labour, for implementing their plans. It is the will, commitment and interest of the husband and wife, rather than resources, that are required to sustain adherence to the principles and implementation of the GMF. From the programme perspective, after the initial investment in setting up the GMF, the most important cost is mentoring activities by the field officers.

#### — Joint training of husband and wife

Joint training enables the husband and wife to discover and analyse their differences related to access to and control over household resources. Joint planning introduces the GMF to the importance of working as a team in their communities and being transparent and accountable to each other. The sharing of the family action plan with other GMFs helps to compel each couple to implement it.

#### — The quick impact of the GMF and benefits for their relationship

In nearly all cases, GMFs leave the first training session well motivated to implement their action plan. For some, the training session might be their first experience of having a serious dialogue about their family life and resources. Most of the activities in the action plan tend to be about addressing practical and basic needs of the family members. Sharing of domestic chores usually brings relief and happiness to the wife, and both the husband and wife tend to be delighted by the increased attention they get from one another.

#### — Diverse development impacts

The GMF model triggers a wide range of inter-related development impacts. For example, improved sanitation resulting from the husband helping to sweep the family compound, reduces the workload of his wife, which in turn gives her time to attend literacy classes and acquire reading and writing skills to qualify for strategic leadership positions.

#### — GMF promotes and sustains positive masculinity in husbands

Participation in the GMF programme provides opportunities for men to change from being 'macho' towards women and does away with the traditional attributes and roles passed on to them by their parents in predominately patriarchal communities. The men accept, live and work with women as equal members within the household and are supportive of their wives' views, efforts and contributions to the household.

#### — Boys and girls are provided with equal opportunities

This is one of the principles the husband and wife must adhere to with their children. Adherence of GMF parents to this principle for example is enabling the girls to enrol and remain in school and boys to acquire domestic skills.

#### — Gender-sensitive management and implementation team

Experienced and committed field officers supported by a senior management team that is committed to using development programmes to promote gender equality and equity issues, have been critical for the success of the GMF. A GMF champion in management is absolutely essential for its success and growth.

### Challenges and measures to overcome them

- How to challenge entrenched traditions and culture that continue to promote inequitable gender relations without undermining positive community and social values?
  - Slow pace of community adoption
  - To bring about rapid acceptance and adoption of GMFs, there is the need to recruit large numbers of families in order to make the social and economic benefits more visible.
- The labour-intensiveness of the GMF programme, particularly monitoring activities
  - There is the need to involve communities in the monitoring process. This is cost-effective and promotes ownership.
- Recruiting GMFs is a challenge for project staff in Sierra Leone. Families need to volunteer, without any promise of rewards apart from their own expectation of the benefits.
  - To overcome this challenge, GMFs are expected to mobilise new members based on their understanding of the approach. These new families attend monthly GMF meetings with the existing families.
- Older members of the household, for example in-laws, grandparents and older siblings of the wife or husband, usually dislike seeing their men sharing chores with the wife and try and discourage the men from remaining in a GMF.
  - Link the family with other GMFs who might have dealt with similar issue from their extended family members.
  - Make it a topic for discussion during monthly and quarterly review meetings of the GMFs.
  - GMF facilitators highlight benefits during project meetings with the stakeholders and emphasize the need for community members and leaders to support the GMFs.
- Polygamous families are predominant in Northern Ghana and Eastern Sierra Leone. Initially husbands were allowed to join with only one wife, but it was soon realized that this created tensions and conflicts within household. The wife who was selected to participate in the GMF activities, was considered by the other wives as being the favourite and SEND was accused of causing the problem.
  - Polygamous families are no longer allowed to enrol in the GMF. SSL is considering developing a gender equality promotion education programme for households with multiple wives because they are significant part of the population with a high incidence of poverty.

### Potential for upscaling

The GMF methodology is scalable. For example, in the Eastern Corridor, SEND Ghana started with 105 GMFs in 2003, and scaled up to 1 069 in 2018. The 4R Nutrient Stewardship Programme plans to scale this up to 4 300 between 2019 and 2024.

SEND started the GMF model initially to increase soya bean production and consumption, but over the years it is being used to promote women and gender equity issues in governance, water, sanitation, education, peace building activities, and enable farm families to adopt climate-smart farming practices.

Families of different levels of income, professions, religions and ethnic groups are members of the GMF programme. Communities in Ghana and Sierra Leone have teachers, health workers, farmers, pastors, traditional leaders and traders who are GMFs and actively support each other.

### Potential for replication

The GMF methodology has been replicated by other development partners, such as Oxfam, Plan International and RING in Ghana and projects supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development in Ethiopia.

## Sustainability of the methodology once project/external input is complete

GMFs continue to promote and be a model for gender change, especially if they are joined with other development programmes that promote gender equality. Men and women belonging to GMFs naturally become leaders in their communities, given that they have undertaken and become committed to positive and progressive changes in their family life. Because GMFs set good examples and are trustworthy, many men and women from the community come to them for advice. This is an incentive for them to continue to promote the GMF model, and engage with traditional authorities, religious and community leaders on the benefits of gender equity.

The GMF programme becomes sustainable when it becomes the main community structure or modality through which all project interventions are delivered at the community level.

## SECTION 7

## RESOURCES

### Publications

- SEND West Africa (2014) Gender Model Family Manual for Community Worker  
<https://sendwestafrica.org/nu/gh/training-manuals/>
- Gender Model Family Manual for Ethiopia in English, also available in Amharic, Tigrinya, and Afan Oromia  
[http://smis-ethiopia.org/wp-content/uploads/kpdocs/93%20AMH\\_Yelbie%20SAPR%20PY2.pdf](http://smis-ethiopia.org/wp-content/uploads/kpdocs/93%20AMH_Yelbie%20SAPR%20PY2.pdf)
- Gender Model Family manual on Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture  
<http://smis-ethiopia.org/index.php/kp-product/nutrition-awareness-for-families-belonging-toirrigation-water-user-associations-facilitators-guide-for-health-and-agriculture-extension-workers/>

### Website

- The Gender Model Family Approach, Women's Empowerment and Nutrition (KIT website)  
<https://www.kit.nl/project/thegender-model-family-approach-womens-empowerment-nutrition/>

### News articles

- <https://www.graphic.com.gh/features/features/send-ghana-implements-gender-model-family-concept.html>
- <https://www.newsghana.com.gh/18-best-families-participate-in-two-day-gender-model-family-summit/>
- <https://cdfsethiopian.com/2020/02/10/gender-model-families-gmf-recognized-in-graduation-ceremony/amp/>
- LANN+: Integrated Food Security (article on Welthungerhilfe website)  
<https://www.welthungerhilfe.org/our-work/approaches/lann/>

### Case studies

- [http://smis-ethiopia.org/wp-content/uploads/kpdocs/130%20NPM\\_Family%20Attitude%20Changes%20Forever.pdf](http://smis-ethiopia.org/wp-content/uploads/kpdocs/130%20NPM_Family%20Attitude%20Changes%20Forever.pdf)
- <http://smis-ethiopia.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Success-Story-GMF.pdf>

### Video

- <https://youtu.be/MFEgw0Hn9Zw> – Oromia (English sub-titles)





Mentee household sharing their vision journey with their mentor Omiya Anyima. Sub-Country, Kitgum District, Uganda

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# 4. Individual Household Mentoring

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## SECTION 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

**Name of the methodology****Individual household mentoring incorporating Gender Action Learning System (GALS) tools****Countries with implementation experience****East Africa:** Uganda (13 districts in the Northern Region and the Kalangala islands in the Central Region)**Start/end date**

December 2010 – ongoing

**Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology**

Projects supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) identify individual household mentoring as a project activity and provide funding to the Ministry of Local Government for implementation. Bioversity International is providing technical support in mainstreaming nutrition into this work.

Current programmes include the Project for the Restoration of Livelihoods in Northern Uganda (PRELNOR) and the Vegetable Oil Development Project 2 (VODP2). They build on experiences on household mentoring gained in an earlier IFAD-supported District Livelihoods Support Programme.

**Purpose of the methodology and the domains of gender inequality that are addressed**

The focus of individual household mentoring is on social inclusion and reaching households that are often excluded from mainstream development initiatives.

With support of a mentor, household members self-diagnose their own situations, identify opportunities and barriers. With support from the mentor, they find ways of going through their own vision journey towards a better livelihood. Awareness raising activities support women's engagement in the decision-making process. Men's understanding of underlying factors that influence key outcomes, such as household nutrition, and their role in addressing these factors is also addressed.

**Contribution of methodology to wider development/organizational/project goals**

Individual household mentoring supports the better realization of project outputs and outcomes by encouraging the active participation of all household members. In addition, household decision making about the use of household resources and its impact on the livelihoods of vulnerable household members is better understood.

**Target group**

Poor smallholder farmers with limited assets and restricted livelihood options who do not currently participate in community activities and development initiatives, including men, women and their children (household-oriented). See Step 1 in section below for the criteria used to identify these households.

## SECTION 2

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

**Key entry points for applying the methodology**

Individual poor households identified by the community

**Implementing partners**

The Ministry of Local Government provides the overall general direction for implementation and coordination with other relevant ministries and agencies. It also chairs the Project Policy Committee.

The staff of the district local government, including sub-county staff of Gulu and Adjumani, lead the implementation, and are responsible for the monitoring and supervision of activities at the district level. The District Community Development Officer (DCDO) is responsible for household mentoring and is supported by Community Development Officers (CDOs) at the sub-county level. The DCDO supervises the CDOs who work directly with the household mentors. Bioversity International works within the same framework (DCDO-CDO-household mentor) to mainstream nutrition throughout the household mentoring approach.

**Process of and criteria for selecting facilitators/champions/mentors**

The household mentors are selected by the CDO, with the support of the local leaders (e.g. local council leaders at the parish and village levels and parish chiefs).

A sub-county CDO oversees about 30 mentors and meets with them every three months.

In each parish there is one male and one female mentor. Initially, each mentor works with 10 households, with the possibility of having an additional 10 households after 12 months. In subsequent years, the frequency of visits to the initial households declines and most are weaned off into farmer groups.

The criteria for selecting the mentors include:

- readiness to volunteer and able to create change/influence;
- ability to communicate well in English (writing and reading);
- ability to communicate in the local language with the target households;
- ability to generate simple reports, and search for and collect other information when needed by the households;
- experience in working with communities and doing community development work;
- residency of the parish and known and respected;
- ability to mobilize and organize others;
- ability to work with individual households in a supportive manner;
- support of gender and youth inclusiveness; and
- not overloaded with other responsibilities.

**Training of facilitators/champions/mentors**

The initial training of trainers of DCOs and CDOs was conducted in 2010 by Resource Project Kenya from Kenya. This team developed the original household mentoring handbook/manual in Uganda. Currently the training of trainers for DCOs and CDOs is done by staff (rural sociologist) from the IFAD-supported project management unit.

After 10 days of training, community development staff at the district level are responsible for training the household mentors in different locations. Topics covered in the training of mentors are:

- household mentoring process (going through the handbook);
- appropriate communication techniques and how to gain trust of households being mentored;
- coaching mentoring, leadership and management skills; and
- basic concepts in nutrition and basic nutrition-related indicators to monitor (recently added).

A refresher training was organized for mentors and CDOs in order to integrate the GALS methodology into the mentoring process. This was facilitated by the project sociologist.



## SECTION 3

## IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

**Key steps in the implementation cycle****— Step 1: Selection of mentee households**

The selection of the mentee households is the responsibility of the whole community (usually a village). The process is facilitated by the CDOs, using wealth-ranking tools through a participatory rural appraisal exercise. The community can redefine the selection criteria to match the situation on ground. Targeting criteria include vulnerable households with some or all of the following:

- access to land and or other natural resources that are not being used productively;
- no or few household assets;
- limited or no income-generating activities;
- poor nutrition, poor shelter and malnourished children;
- people who are socially isolated from the community and development activities;
- many dependents, including the care of orphans, the chronically ill or the elderly;
- women or children acting as the head of the household;
- children or wives as the main source of family labour;
- someone who dropped out of school before reaching primary seven acting as the head of the household; and
- the willingness, and physical and mental capacity to respond to mentoring and other development opportunities.

**— Step 2: Mentors work with the mentee household and a vision is developed**

Planning at the household level is facilitated by the household mentor. It requires establishing a rapport and trust with household members and building their confidence.

- The household undertakes a situational analysis to identify the causes of their exclusion and the reasons for their lack of assets and limited livelihood activities using the GALS Challenge Tree.
- Baseline data are collected (see indicators in section below).
- The household undertakes household resource mapping.
- The household selects and prioritizes near-nil investments, initially based on the household's resource base and capacity, without the need for external support.
- The household, with the guidance of the mentor, develops a household vision that includes a food security plan, asset formation, improved sanitation, better child health and improved gender relations. Mentee households draw their own vision journey using the GALS methodology.
- The household prepares an action plan, based on the vision, with targets and indicators. The use of locally available resources for start-up activities to promote self-reliance is encouraged.

In the first 4 months, a mentor visits a household once every week. The number of visits decreases to every two weeks for a further four to six months, depending on the progress made by the household. Eventually visits take place once a month until the end of the mentoring cycle (12 to 24 months).

**— Step 3: Supporting early implementation of household action plan**

- The mentoring process always emphasizes food security, sanitation and hygiene as the first steps towards achieving good health, and generates energy and morale for moving into bigger activities in the action plan.
- Implementation of food security and improved household sanitation plans, and child health activities is supported through the provision of agricultural-related inputs, seeds of selected enterprises and capacity building/knowledge acquisition covering production, post-harvest handling, and safety and hygiene. No money is given at this initial stage.
- Once households have realized some basic achievements and their confidence increases, the mentor encourages household members to begin interacting with their neighbours and other mentored households. This exposes them to information about marketing produce and where to obtain other basic services, which further develops their confidence.
- Achieving food security also usually means generating some surplus for sale. The cash is used to buy non-farm items (e.g. paraffin, soap and salt). In this way, interactions outside the household become automatic.

- The process of asset accumulation is initiated by selling produce and saving income.
- Households are encouraged to develop self-reliance by monitoring and reviewing progress with their action plans with their mentors.
- **Step 4: Building functional partnerships**
  - When households have improved their ability to generate income, they are assisted in identifying and joining viable common interest groups, such as Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), producer organizations, marketing groups and Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs).
  - The mentor, with support of the District Commercial Officer, introduces households to the concepts of credit and marketing.
  - Linking households to other services depends on the vulnerabilities that have been identified. However, significant vulnerabilities, such as health needs and school attendance, are handled as soon as they have been identified.
  - Linkage to support services, such as Functional Adult Literacy (FAL), depends on the literacy level of the household members and their interest. If the level is low, the mentoring sessions will emphasise the importance of literacy.
  - Households that are not able to join common interest groups are clustered into small groups of up to seven to initiate the process of group formation. They perform tasks together (e.g. land preparation) to achieve their vision more quickly. Some of the household clusters are guided to become VSLAs.
  - Monitoring and reporting of household progress continues.
- **Step 5: Supporting household's active participation in development initiatives (pre-exit)**
  - In preparation for concluding the mentoring process, households and their groups are supported to improve their investments, manage their credit and actively participate in produce marketing processes. Many households join project-supported farmer groups, which act as a loose form of graduation into other project activities.
  - Households receive a food security grant after nine months of mentoring to purchase inputs that will enhance productivity in crop production enterprises (e.g. quality seed, fertilizer, implements) when they are weaned off the mentoring process and join a farmers' group.
  - Monitoring and reporting on progress of households and their groups continues.
- **Step 6: Official ending of the mentoring process**
  - A final household mentoring progress report based on the household mentoring methodology logframe is prepared and shared with stakeholders, including the project coordination team and district-level staff.

### Average length of the implementation cycle

- 12 to 24 months depending on the capacity and interest of the individual household

Despite the official end of cycle, there have been reports of mentors and some of their households continuing to follow up with each other, but at a very reduced frequency.

### Graduation from the methodology

Households graduate from the mentoring process. The pathway is: food security and good sanitation; preliminary interaction with the outside world when marketing produce; forming or joining common interest groups; joining a VSLA; participating in community leadership; and accessing information about other activities and government programmes.

It takes one to three years for a household to move significantly towards realizing its initial vision. The graduation period is between 12 to 24 months. In most cases, there is still contact with the mentor after graduation, and households receive a food security grant and transition into farmer groups.

Criteria for graduation:

- Household members have self-confidence, skills and motivation to continue the process of vision setting.
- Household dynamics have progressed with regard to gender and inclusion.
- Household is integrated into larger mainstream development activities.

Indicators for graduation:

- Household reports an increase in production.
- Household is visibly food secure.
- Household has implemented a large percentage of activities in their action plan.
- Some adult members have joined several development groups.
- Visibly improved gender relations in the household (e.g. joint planning and decision making, joint marketing).

## SECTION 4

## MONITORING

### Monitoring system

#### — Internal by participants

Following the development of their own action plans and setting their own vision journey, households monitor and assess their own progress, with the mentor providing backstopping support and advice.

#### — External

Using the household mentor visit/activity log sheet, mentors record progress at the household level. Monitoring of household mentoring is carried out by local government staff, particularly the district and sub-county CDOs.

### Indicators

There are general indicators covering seven basic output areas that are set out in the mentoring handbook. In addition, each household is expected to have its own indicators arising from their situational analysis and action plan. To be able to measure progress, a baseline is obtained during the initial encounter with households using the household baseline form, which serves as a reference point.

#### — Quantitative

Quantitative information is collected at the household level. Bioversity International has recommended that these data be disaggregated (e.g. by sex of household head).

Output 1: Improved food security

- Number of meals per day
- Number of hungry months in a year, which is defined as the number of months in which the household experiences the most food insecurity (i.e. unable to access enough food to have at least three meals per day)
- Dietary intake diversity (measured by the intake of foods containing different nutrients, such as proteins, carbohydrates and vitamins)

Output 2: Increased asset ownership

- Types and number of assets owned at the beginning and acquired during the mentoring period

Output 3: Improved household sanitation

- Number of bath shelters constructed
- Number of latrines constructed
- Number of drying racks constructed
- Number of rainwater tanks constructed

Output 4: Households participate in groups and other development initiatives

- Number of household members (by sex, age) joining FAL classes
- Number of household members (by sex, age) joining producer and marketing groups
- Number of household members (by sex, age) joining savings and credit groups

Output 5: Improved child health

- Number of children within the normal growth curve (progressive growth), measured using a standard WHO growth curve, derived from the child immunization card
- Number of malnourished children in households, measured using standard parameters, such as wasting, oedema, stunting and scaly skin (these are visible signs of malnutrition in children that mentors can use to determine the number of malnourished children in the household)

Output 6: Construction of improved dwellings

- Types of walls/roofs/floors

#### — Qualitative

Output 7: Improved household gender relations

- Less domestic conflict in the household
- Evidence of joint planning and decision making as a household (this is evident when a household member – especially the wife – talks competently about the household plans and activities)
- Changes in workload by gender
- Equitable access to resources (e.g. land for cultivation), and access to benefits (e.g. the proceeds from the sale of produce)

## SECTION 5

## BUDGET

### Main items of expenditure

- Funds to support capacity building of the mentors (training of trainers and refresher training)
- Facilitation of household mentors to ensure they can carry out the regular visits by having bicycles or finances to enable mobility (each mentor gets USD 40 per month and a bicycle)
- Facilitation allowance for household mentors to ensure they have job aids and monitoring tools
- Facilitation allowance for local government development staff (district and sub-county) to enable them to supervise the household mentors
- Funds to provide seeds, farm inputs, livestock to mentee households
- Funds to provide the food security grant and improved cooking stoves (total grant USD 120 per household) provided at the final stage of mentoring process

### Total budget

Not available

## SECTION 6

## RESULTS

### Number of beneficiaries reached

PRELNOR currently has 200 household mentors, who have reached 4 000 households (in two rounds from 2017 to date). The target is to reach 10 000 households.

Under VODP2, implemented in Kalangala, currently 30 household mentors have been recruited and are undergoing capacity building. The target is 1 000 farmer households.

### Main changes attributed to the methodology

#### — Gender-related changes

- Social empowerment and social inclusion of vulnerable groups, especially women, in development activities
- Development in households of a spirit of self-reliance and the ability to handle household issues together as a unit
- Capacity to discuss sensitive household problems together, such as HIV/AIDS-related issues, gender inequalities in asset ownership and access to benefits of household enterprises
- Improved gender relations including joint decision making, especially on household resource use; sharing of responsibilities (not yet very significant) and productive work; and less domestic conflict because of joint planning. It was found that one of the key causes of domestic conflict was the fact that household members hid their plans and productive activities (e.g. proceeds from marketing produce, keeping of assets secretly outside the household setting) from each other. This has changed because of the mentoring.

### — Other changes for mentee households

- Access to a support system during critical stages of household transition from dependence to self-sufficiency and becoming an active player in local marketing value chains
- Conscious effort by household members to come out of poverty and address their vulnerabilities by using their own locally available resources, possibly with little outside help
- Clear understanding and enhancement of their household development plans
- Improved sanitation and hygiene
- Improved food security and household incomes
- Improved self-esteem and self-worth
- Insider perspective on navigating their socio-economic development pathways
- Ability to develop mentoring relationships in different settings (e.g. within family with older family members and younger ones, or religious groups) where mentoring is not readily available, and gain opportunities to become future mentors

### — Other changes for household mentors

- Exposure to practical household mentoring process and pathways out of poverty
- Satisfaction from imparting wisdom and experience to poorer households without making a huge time commitment
- Ongoing attention to own career development through enhancing skills related to coaching, mentoring, leadership and management
- Interactions with different households that enable all household members to deal with different dynamics and gain exposure to different ways of thinking, styles, personalities and culture, which help them also to grow as individuals
- Recognition and enhanced self-esteem in the community, which is beyond financial reward

## Key success factors and strengths of the methodology

- The participatory approach involves the community in identifying households in need of mentoring. This strengthens targeting, enhances ownership and ensures that the community represents a safe environment to support the mentored households.
- The household approach considers a household as one unit. This contributes to the creation of a generational household memory and support system that extends beyond the life of the head of the household.
- The use of locally known volunteers as household mentors enhances trust between household members and mentors. This relationship often continues informally even after the project is closed.
- The self-diagnosis approach for target households ensures greater ownership of the process, and the vision remains the focus of the household for many years, which makes the approach a powerful tool for sustainability.
- The visioning process is backed by (i) a focused analysis of relationships, resources, power, challenges and opportunities; (ii) systematic planning; and (iii) a systematic assessment of progress made.
- A framework to ensure the mentored household can be traced even after graduation contributes to the transitioning of the households into farmer groups with the support of a mentor from their locality, and ensures continued follow up, growth and sustainability.
- The provision of the food security grant towards the end of the mentoring process is a major motivator for households to complete the mentoring cycle.

## Challenges and measures to overcome them

### — Volunteer fatigue

Mentors receive about USD 40 per month plus a bicycle to facilitate their movement and interaction with households but, in reality, have many competing tasks and incur expenditures that are often higher than the facilitation allowance provided.

### — Reluctance of households to graduate from mentoring

Households wish to continue the ongoing relationship with their mentor, which contributes to making the mentor's workload excessive.

### — Household capacity

Some households are not able to read and write, which made written action plans a challenge. For this reason, GALS methodologies based on pictorials were introduced.

### — Mentor capacity

Recruiting well-educated mentors is a challenge, as the facilitation allowance is not an incentive to keep them engaged for long. Consequently, most mentors have received limited education and this compromises their capacity to understand and interpret the guidelines, apply and demonstrate key messages and practices, and accurately monitor progress in the households.

### — Poor targeting

Instances of 'poor identification' of beneficiaries occur because of the lack of participatory rural appraisal skills by community development staff.

### — Lack of motivation and misunderstanding about the purpose of mentoring from the mentees' perspective

Some households are motivated to participate in mentoring to access the food security grant. This can jeopardize the 'near nil investment' approach of the methodology, which should be based only on a household's existing resources.

## Potential for upscaling

### — Requirements to support upscaling

- Greater visibility through the sharing and dissemination of the outputs and outcomes attributable to the approach

### — Potential improvements

- Greater use of tools that are visual and require drawing rather than writing will address the problem of illiteracy among mentors and their target households.
- To overcome the low facilitation allowance, develop a modality where household mentors can be drawn from existing extension service providers (e.g. village health teams), so that the tasks of mentoring can be included in their current terms of reference.
- Review the target group and the definition of vulnerable households to ensure that the intervention works with households who are in a position to effectively respond to and use the resources provided, make significant improvements in their livelihoods and ensure continuity. For example, working with a household in which an elderly woman (over 80 years old) is living with her grandchildren aged between 6 and 15 years old could make it difficult to achieve a positive change in livelihoods unless the household is linked to other supportive and productive members of the community.

### — Adaptation

The approach has great potential for adaptation in different contexts. Currently the household mentoring approach is being used as entry point for mainstreaming nutrition into PRELNOR and VODP2.

## Potential for replication

### — Key enablers

- A household is a universal unit that is applicable in all settings, be it urban or rural, and low or high social economic conditions.
- The approach can be applied and used to address diverse thematic areas based on the challenges in specific regions.
- Continued improvements in the guidelines and accompanying tools based on lessons learnt throughout the many years of its use, creates extensive opportunities for making the current version replicable.

## Sustainability of the methodology once project/external input is complete

Household mentoring activities have been mainstreamed into the local government system where the IFAD-supported PRELNOR project operates, using the Community Development Department to oversee its implementation through refresher training of the mentors.

Having household mentors from the target community creates opportunities for continued informal follow up. The transitioning of the graduated households to farmer groups ensures they are in a context where their progress can still be monitored, and they can continue to receive support with regards to skills, knowledge and inputs.



## SECTION 7

## RESOURCES

**Publications**

- Ministry of Local Government (2017) Household mentoring handbook for household mentors, prepared for Project for the Restoration of Livelihoods in the Northern Region (PRELNOR)  
<https://www.ifad.org/en/web/knowledge/publication/asset/41455209>
- Ekesa, B.; Nabuuma, D.; Namukose, S.; Upenyitho, G. (2020) Nutrition Social Behavior Change and Communication (SBCC) guidance. Kampala (Uganda): Bioversity International. 32 p.  
<https://hdl.handle.net/10568/107925>
- Ekesa, B.; Nabuuma, D.; Namukose, S.; Upenyitho, G. (2019) Behavior communication: nutrition key message booklet for extension service providers. 32 p.  
<https://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/107212> or <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/107212>
- Ekesa, B.; Nabuuma, D.; Namukose, S.; Upenyitho, G. (2019) Behavior communication: nutrition key message booklet for extension service providers. 32 p.  
<https://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/107212> or <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/107212>
- IFAD Case study: Household mentoring, Uganda (2014)  
<https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/40205133/Household+Mentoring%2C+Uganda.pdf/fb332ae7-77ce-441c-9841-ac464d34ebf0>



Family who participated in a gender transformative, men's engagement programme in Nyaruguru, Rwanda

©Perttu Saralampi for Promundo-US and RWAMREC

# 5 Journeys of Transformation or Engaging Men as Allies in Women's Economic Empowerment

PREPARED BY

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## SECTION 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

**Name of the methodology**

**Journeys of Transformation, also known as Engaging Men as Allies in Women's Economic Empowerment**

**Countries with implementation experience**

- **East and Southern Africa:** Rwanda, Mozambique, Zambia
- **Asia:** Bangladesh, Sri Lanka

**Start/end date**

Promundo's original curriculum for Journeys of Transformation was developed in 2011 with CARE International and the Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC), a national NGO founded with a mission to engage men in gender equality and violence prevention. It was first piloted and then rolled out in tandem with CARE's Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). The approach has been further adapted and implemented to complement economic development, women's economic empowerment, or livelihoods programmes globally, several of which are ongoing.

**Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology**

Promundo is a global leader in promoting gender justice and preventing violence by engaging men and boys in partnership with women, girls and people of all gender identities.

Promundo has since adapted and/or developed additional curricula from Journeys of Transformation to engage men as allies in women's economic empowerment as part of economic development or livelihoods programming in partnership with other organizations, such as Concern Worldwide, WorldFish and World Vision.

**Purpose of the methodology and the domains of gender inequality that are addressed**

The Journeys of Transformation methodology emerged from the vision that, although women's economic empowerment programming has powerful benefits on its own, it can be made even more effective at advancing gender equality when men are deliberately engaged as allies. Promundo develops programmes that operate in conjunction with women's economic empowerment initiatives to engage men as partners and ensure that they understand the positive effects of shifting gender roles around earning power.

The gender transformative curricula engage men, alongside their partners, in group education sessions designed to challenge inequitable gender norms and power dynamics, including those that hinder women's ability to participate in and fully benefit from economic opportunities. Core issues addressed include:

- promoting shared household decision making;
- addressing unpaid care work and promoting men's caregiving; and
- preventing intimate partner violence.

**Contribution of the methodology to wider development/organizational/project goals**

Since its founding in Brazil in 1997, Promundo has worked in collaboration with partners to advance gender equality and prevent violence in over 40 countries around the world. It does this through high-impact research and evaluation, targeted advocacy efforts, evidence-based education and community-wide programme implementation. Exploring positive models of "what it means to be a man" and promoting healthy, respectful masculinity leads to improvements in the lives of women and girls, as well as in men's own lives.

Engaging men as allies in women's economic empowerment contributes to wider development goals. Working with men, women and households, can challenge the norms about who should perform paid and unpaid work in communities and societies. This work, together with the promotion of men's participation in unpaid care work and women's engagement in decision making, contributes to a more gender-equal world, including an intergenerational shift in who does care work. Working with men as allies in women's economic empowerment also provides an entry point for addressing intimate partner violence, sexual and reproductive health, and parenting.

## Target group

The methodology complements economic development and empowerment programmes, and targets the male partners of women who participate in these programmes.

Typically, facilitators and/or project staff first identify and ask all partnered women who are participating in their economic development programming if they would be interested in participating in a group education intervention together with their partner. In some settings, depending on whether the programme (e.g. savings group) is targeting women only or both women and men, men will also be asked. Those who are interested are invited to attend the group education session together with their partner. Facilitators and/or staff may also reach out directly to the male partner (with the women's consent) to tell them more about the intervention and/or hold specific information sessions for couples to learn more before participating in the intervention.

In some settings group education interventions include specific sessions only for men, which come later in the group sessions. Occasionally, partners ask all couples from households receiving support from the organization to participate in small group sessions, but this is not generally recommended.

In Sri Lanka, the methodology has been designed specifically to include persons with disabilities. In Bangladesh, the methodology also includes four sessions targeting mothers-in-law.

## SECTION 2

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

### Key entry points for applying the methodology

The entry point for applying the methodology are individuals or couples at the household level.

Women and their male partners are recruited from ongoing economic development or livelihoods programmes implemented by Promundo's partners to participate in gender transformative group education sessions. The programmes include savings and lending groups, producer groups, farmer field schools, and graduation programmes that often target poor or ultra-poor households.

### Implementing partners

The implementing partners vary according to the context and nature of the project but are usually international, national or local NGOs.

In Rwanda, following the initial development of the methodology for CARE International with RWAMREC, the methodology was adapted for Concern Worldwide (2014) who implemented it in collaboration with RWAMREC.

In Zambia (2013–2015), Promundo collaborated with WorldFish and the CGIAR to develop a curriculum to complement its Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC). WorldFish worked with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Caritas-Mongu to implement the curriculum.

In Bangladesh (2013–2015), Promundo collaborated with WorldFish and the CGIAR to develop a curriculum to complement its aquaculture for income and nutrition programme for women. Since 2017, Promundo has been collaborating with World Vision Australia and World Vision Bangladesh to develop curricula to complement its work with producer groups and infant and young child feeding groups.

In Mozambique (2015–2017), Promundo collaborated with Concern Worldwide and HOPEM to develop a curriculum to engage men in improving nutrition outcomes and create links to farmer field schools and care groups.

In Sri Lanka (since 2016), Promundo is collaborating with World Vision Australia and World Vision Sri Lanka to develop a curriculum that complements Savings for Transformation (S4T) and producer groups.



### Process of and criteria for selecting facilitators/champions/mentors

The group education sessions are facilitated with small groups of 10 to 20 individuals who are led by 1 to 2 trained facilitators. Facilitators have included staff of the international NGO or national NGO overseeing the implementation of the approach and/or the economic development programme to which it is tied; staff from local partner organizations; and local community members trained to facilitate the approach. The intervention targets men and addresses issues of masculinity, so facilitators are often, but not always, men. However, successful groups have been led by either male or female facilitators. In some settings a pair of facilitators (one male, one female) are trained to facilitate the small group sessions.

Successful facilitators usually meet the following criteria:

- personally committed to gender justice and women’s economic empowerment;
- able to model respectful, equitable gender relations;
- capable of building trust with participants and facilitating open dialogue and sharing;
- able to engage with participants in a participatory, non-hierarchical manner; and
- able to withhold judgment and refrain from ‘teaching’ the participants

Local community facilitators typically receive transportation and communication allowances to enable them to reach the groups. Sometimes these individuals are working within existing government (or parallel) structures at the community level, and are therefore not remunerated directly for their facilitation.

### Training of facilitators/champions/mentors

The training of facilitators is sometimes done through a training of trainers or cascading approach. Promundo trains master trainers within local, national or international NGOs who cascade the training, or works directly to train the facilitators. Facilitator training generally lasts between 5 and 14 days depending on the context and the experience and skills of the facilitators. Refresher training (two to five days) is often given after the piloting of the approach or after one cycle of implementation has been completed.

The content of the training usually begins with understanding a gender transformative approach (GTA) and men’s engagement. Facilitators often come with a passion for and some experience in working on gender justice issues (personally or professionally). However, it is important to first set the stage and ensure they all have a common foundation from which to work from and understand the importance of creating spaces for individuals to critically reflect on, and question, harmful gender norms in order to foster social change and gender equality.

The training also includes an overview of the approach and how working with men and couples at the household level can contribute to addressing some of the barriers to women’s economic empowerment. The facilitators are introduced to the content for each session and related activities, and have the opportunity to see them carried out. Facilitators have time to practice facilitating the activities, which consist of role playing and participatory exercises, and receive feedback. Additional time is spent ensuring that they are informed about the logistical and organizational aspects of implementation.

## SECTION 3

## IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

### Key steps in the implementation cycle

The steps in the implementation process vary by location and project, but generally include the following:

#### — Step 1: Formative research to inform curriculum development

Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews are held with men and women who will be targeted by the intervention. The research aims to understand existing gendered attitudes and behaviours with regard to a range of issues including employment and income-generation, decision making, unpaid care work, violence, the barriers to women’s economic participation and empowerment, and perceptions of how men can support women’s economic empowerment. If the curriculum is being developed to complement an existing economic development programme, interviews are also conducted with facilitators, participants and key stakeholders to understand the impact of the existing programme and the barriers it faces in reaching its full potential. This includes understanding men’s perspectives and reactions to women’s participation in the economic development programme.

### — Step 2: Curriculum development

This is based on information gathered from the formative research and is tailored to the local context and aims of the economic development programme. Curriculum adaptation is led by Promundo in collaboration with the partners. To the extent possible, input is sought from implementing partners and target participants in order to ensure the curriculum resonates with those it aims to reach. Typical content includes sessions on gender roles and norms; power; unpaid care work; men's caregiving; household decision making; men's support of women's paid work or participation in a particular economic development or livelihoods programme (tailored to the specific context); couple's communication; violence prevention; and sexual and reproductive health.

### — Step 3: Capacity building of staff on gender transformative approaches

It is critical that staff go through their own process of critical reflection and dialogue where they question harmful gender norms and their own gendered attitudes to ensure that engaging men as allies in women's economic empowerment is truly gender transformative. Prior to conducting training on the curriculum, Promundo often conducts a three- to five-day preliminary training on GTAs for the implementing and strategy partners. This training focuses on the importance of addressing harmful gender norms and masculinity in order to achieve programme goals, and understanding the core elements of a GTA. It includes staff reflection on their own gendered attitudes and behaviour, as well as the mapping of the gender norms and power dynamics present in the communities in which they work.

### — Step 4: Training of staff/local facilitators to implement the approach

The training of trainers is conducted on the curriculum with a set of master trainers – often staff of the organization responsible for implementing the programme as well as other key stakeholders – who then cascade the training down to the facilitators. In some (limited) instances, the training is done directly with the facilitators. The training of trainers focuses on providing an understanding of the aims and approach of Journeys of Transformation and the content of the curriculum, and providing opportunities for facilitators to both see and practice the implementation of the group activities.

### — Step 5: Piloting the draft curriculum and final revision

Where possible, a small pilot of the curriculum is done with the target group in order to test the applicability and feasibility of the session activities and the logistical aspects of implementation, prior to full implementation. Feedback is elicited from the facilitators and participants, as well as from observers from the implementing partner and/or Promundo. This feedback is used to strengthen the curriculum and address any logistical challenges encountered.

### — Step 6: Implementation of the final curriculum in group education sessions

After the successful finalization of the curriculum, participants are recruited, and full implementation of the curriculum begins with groups of between 10 to 20 individuals. Implementation includes participatory activities (e.g. role play, games); guided discussions to build trust and encourage communication between partners; and monitoring and evaluation. Very often, implementation is staggered in cycles with different groups within a community, with a new cycle starting every three to five months.

### — Step 7: Learning and scaling up (where applicable)

Following implementation and evaluation, key lessons learnt and outcomes are shared with participants, community members and key stakeholders. Where possible, efforts are made to mobilize key institutions and/or fundraise to enable the scaling up of the approach.

## Average length of the implementation cycle

The methodology is time-intensive in order to change attitudes and behaviours related to deeply entrenched gender norms. The process of developing and piloting the curriculum often takes between four and six months. The implementation cycles generally last between three and five months, depending on the length of the curriculum. The methodology is tailored to the local context and the economic development or empowerment programme it complements. The curriculum may include between 10 and 20 sessions, which can last from 1.5 hours to 3 hours per session. Sessions are usually implemented on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.



## Graduation from the methodology

In some settings, a more formal ‘graduation’ from the programme is organized, often with the families and friends of participating couples, as well as local authorities. However, it is not a core component of the methodology.

## SECTION 4

## MONITORING

### Monitoring system

Monitoring is conducted by the implementing partners and facilitators through routine feedback meetings with the facilitators and the submission of monitoring forms. Monitoring data gathered include participant attendance and retention, session implementation, success stories and challenges encountered. The implementing partner also conducts monitoring visits to the group education sessions and follows up with facilitators who may need additional training or support. Periodic feedback is solicited from programme participants to gather insights on how the sessions and topics addressed are perceived and appreciated.

### Indicators

The indicators used to evaluate the impact of the methodology vary depending on the partner and programme, but generally include some of the following quantitative indicators.

- Percentage of men and women with equitable gender attitudes based on Gender Equitable Men (GEM) scale scores (see *Making Women Count* in the resource materials for a description of how to use the GEM scale)
- Percentage of men and women who believe it is acceptable for a woman to work outside the home
- Percentage of men and women who support men’s caregiving
- Percentage of men and women reporting an increase in joint household decision making or a reduction in male dominance of household decision making (e.g. related to household finances)
- Percentage of women reporting experiencing intimate partner violence or percentage of men reporting the perpetration of intimate partner violence (Note: these indicators are not used in the same project or with couples from the same household; timeframe for experiencing intimate partner violence is adjusted based on the project and evaluation period)
- Women’s and men’s time spent on unpaid care work
- Women’s time spent on paid work
- Men’s support for women’s economic activities

Data on these indicators are also gathered qualitatively through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with male and female participants, facilitators, the implementing partner and key stakeholders in the community.

Where possible, information from the evaluation of the economic development or empowerment programme that the methodology complements is collected (e.g. with a control group) and used to understand whether the addition of the gender transformative male engagement component has contributed to greater economic impacts of the programme.

## SECTION 5

## BUDGET

**Main items of expenditure**

The budget varies significantly depending on the context, length of implementation, rigour of the evaluation, and number of participants reached. The greatest costs relate to the training of staff and facilitators, which covers both the mindset reflection period and the training on the curriculum, and the research, monitoring and evaluation. The group education itself can be implemented at low cost depending on the context, whether incentives are provided to participants, and the costs associated with facilitators. Facilitators generally receive transportation and communication allowances/stipends or other forms of material support to enable them to implement activities, rather than being paid for implementation and transportation.

**Total budget**

Not available

## SECTION 6

## RESULTS

**Number of beneficiaries reached**

A conservative estimate is that at least 3 000 direct beneficiaries have been reached by the approach through programmes that Promundo has been directly engaged in since 2011. The actual number will be higher because several programmes have been expanded or are ongoing without Promundo's involvement and, because the methodology is open access, other organizations may be implementing it.

**Main changes attributed to the methodology****— Gender-related changes**

- More equitable gender attitudes among men and women
- Increased support of men for women's participation in livelihoods or paid work
- Greater levels of shared household financial decision making and increased agency of women in making decisions
- Increased participation of men in unpaid care work, including childcare and household responsibilities
- Greater communication between couples and less conflict
- Less acceptance of intimate partner violence among men and women

**— Other changes**

The results of the field testing of Journeys of Transformation in Rwanda in 2011-12 found that households that had participated in the VSLAs together with men's engagement group education reported greater household income than households that only participated in the VSLAs.

**Key success factors and strengths of the methodology****— Positive approach to engaging men**

Men can be critical allies in supporting women's economic empowerment and gender justice. This methodology takes a positive approach to framing men's engagement – highlighting the benefits that it can bring to women, men and their families – by targeting men as part of the solution rather than the problem. The group education sessions create a space for men to better understand their partners' involvement in economic development initiatives and how they can work together for the betterment of their household and to achieve their long-term goals for their household and family.

**— Taking a gender transformative approach**

The group education sessions create safe spaces where men and women can critically reflect on and question existing gender norms and roles, and learn and practice new ways of behaving. Through personal reflection and dialogue, men begin to see how rigid constructions of masculinity not only can lead to harm for their partners but also for themselves, and see the benefits of more equitable relationships.

### — Emphasis on men’s caregiving

The methodology has a strong focus on increasing men’s participation in childcare and household tasks in order to address the inequitable distribution of care work. This includes reflection on men’s roles as fathers and how restrictive gender norms discourage men’s caregiving. Through dialogue and participatory activities, men are encouraged to become more equitable, be involved and non-violent caregivers and partners, and recognize the benefits of embracing more nurturing, loving relationships.

### — Working with couples

The group education sessions create important opportunities for partners to discuss together their perspectives and experiences and develop a shared vision for their household. For some couples, the sessions are the first time that partners openly discuss key issues like decision making or household responsibilities. Activities also equip participants with skills and knowledge to help them resolve conflict.

### — Supportive peer environment

The sessions take place within a small group – individuals attend the same group for the duration of the programme – and are designed to create a safe, supportive environment for men and women to learn from each other and their peers. The group offers a support network for men and women to safely learn and navigate new, more equitable ways of being, with support from others.

## Challenges and measures to overcome them

- “Change starts with us”: staff and facilitators are not free from bias.
  - Buy-in is required at multiple levels of the organizations involved, along with an understanding that norm change takes time. Therefore, buy-in from staff and senior management is important to enable success, funding and sustainability. The management (not just the staff in charge of gender) must see the importance of and champion gender transformative men’s engagement. However, if budgets are tight, activities related to staff reflection on their mindset is the first thing that many people want to cut, on the assumption that their staff have already bought into GTAs.
  - Training staff and facilitators on GTAs is critical.
  - For facilitators, a mindset shift may be required to move away from a ‘teaching’ style to a more participatory process where the facilitator is tasked with sparking conversation and facilitating the sharing of experiences.
  - For some partners, implementation requires shifting away from an NGO-driven schedule, to one that is participant-driven. Some organizations have faced challenges in the recruitment and retention of participants because they organize the group sessions at dates, times or locations that are convenient for their staff. Listening to participants and organizing group meetings when it is most convenient for them can lead to greater participation, buy-in and retention in the programme.
- This methodology is designed as a complement to or an integrated part of economic development or livelihoods programmes, which may provide material goods, training, or financial support to their participants. As such, it is important that there is transparency on any incentives (or lack of) when recruiting participants for the men’s engagement component in order to establish clear expectations.

## Potential for upscaling

To date, implementation has often been carried out as a pilot activity or on a small scale. There is great potential for international and national NGOs to scale up this GTA as a core part of their economic development or livelihoods programmes that target or include women. In addition, there is potential for reaching a greater number of households by taking this approach to scale through government social protection programmes, such as cash transfers.

Upscaling requires organizations or governments to have the buy-in, funding and commitment to a long-term process of social change necessary to implement the approach on a large scale.

## Potential for replication

Promundo's methodology for engaging men as allies in women's economic empowerment has already been adapted to multiple settings and economic development programmes implemented by a range of partners.

## Sustainability of the methodology once project/external input is complete

The methodology is designed to foster a process of attitudinal and behaviour change among participants, which includes but is not limited to, promoting men's support for women's work, women's decision-making power, and men's participation in sharing care work within the home. The methodology itself is time-bound, but the process and the impact of the attitudinal and behaviour change promoted in the intervention is a longer-term process.

Promundo's evaluations of similar gender transformative interventions engaging men (e.g. in maternal, newborn and child health) have demonstrated that key changes related to men's participation in unpaid care work, women's decision-making power, and women's experiences of intimate partner violence have been sustained more than one year after the intervention ended.

In Rwanda, for example, group members have continued to meet or reached out to other community members to promote change in their communities beyond the life of the programme.

## SECTION 7

## RESOURCES

### Publications

- *Original Journeys of Transformation manual created for CARE International*  
<https://promundoglobal.org/resources/journeys-of-transformation-a-training-manual-for-engaging-men-as-allies-in-womens-economic-empowerment/?lang=english>
- *Making Women Count* (description of use the GEM scale)  
<https://promundoglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Measuring-Gender-Attitude-Using-Gender-Equitable-Men-Scale.pdf>
- *Engaging men for improved nutrition outcomes in Mozambique*  
[https://admin.concern.net/sites/default/files/media/migrated/engaging\\_men\\_for\\_improved\\_nutrition\\_outcomes\\_in\\_mozambique.pdf](https://admin.concern.net/sites/default/files/media/migrated/engaging_men_for_improved_nutrition_outcomes_in_mozambique.pdf)
- *Zambia manual produced for WorldFish*  
<https://promundoglobal.org/resources/silcgta-facilitation-manual-savings-internal-lending-communities-plus-gender-transformative-approach-silcgta/>
- Promundo-US and CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems (2016) *Promoting Gender-Transformative Change with Men and Boys: A Manual to Spark Critical Reflection on Harmful Gender Norms with Men and Boys in Aquatic Agricultural Systems*  
<https://promundoglobal.org/resources/promoting-gender-transformative-change-men-boys/>
- *Considering Gender: Practical guidance for rural development initiatives in Solomon Islands*  
<https://promundoglobal.org/resources/considering-gender-practical-guidance-rural-development-initiatives-solomon-islands/>
- Promundo-US and WorldFish (2016) *The SILC+GTA facilitation manual: The Savings and Internal Lending Communities plus Gender-Transformative Approach*  
<https://promundoglobal.org/resources/silcgta-facilitation-manual-savings-internal-lending-communities-plus-gender-transformative-approach-silcgta/>





Nurturing Connections®  
game as part of Family Farms  
for the Future project funded  
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©HKI-Cambodia

# 6. Nurturing Connections®

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## SECTION 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

**Name of the methodology****Nurturing Connections®****Countries with implementation experience**

- **West Africa:** Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal
- **Asia:** Bangladesh, Cambodia

**Start/end date**

2012 – ongoing

**Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology**

Founded in 1915, Helen Keller International (HKI) is dedicated to saving and improving the sight and lives of the world's vulnerable by combating the causes and consequences of blindness, poor health and malnutrition. HKI has more than 120 programmes in 20 countries around the world.

**Purpose of the methodology and the domains of gender inequality that are addressed**

Nurturing Connections® was developed and piloted by HKI in 2012. It has been adapted for homestead food production (agriculture and aquaculture) and nutrition, and tested in market development initiatives. The curriculum seeks to challenge and transform inequalities related to power relations, traditions and socio-cultural norms that can pose an obstacle to achieving better nutrition and production outcomes. The curriculum is delivered as a standalone gender component in parallel with technical training on agriculture and nutrition. The process guides households towards more equitable intra-household relations, including:

- women's decisions about agricultural production, childcare and health seeking;
- women's access to decision-making power over productive resources;
- women's control over use of income and assets;
- women's self-efficacy;
- shared responsibility for domestic tasks; and
- improved spousal communication to promote the resolution of conflicts, new gender norms and new attitudes about violence.

**Contribution of the methodology to wider development/organizational/project goals**

Nurturing Connections® is integrated into multisector nutrition programmes, including nutrition-specific interventions and nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

HKI has been implementing Nurturing Connections® through the Enhanced Homestead Food Production (EHFP) programme, which aims to improve nutrition and food security of vulnerable households by enabling women to exert more influence over household food production and the use of income, and supporting the adoption of improved nutrition and hygiene behaviours in the household.

**Target group**

- Mothers with young children (under two), their husbands and in-laws in rural areas
- Key influencers, such as village leaders



## SECTION 2

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

**Key entry points for applying the methodology**

Nurturing Connections® is implemented with households participating in EHFP programmes, in which couples with young children, elders and other influential family members are invited to attend the sessions first in separate peer groups (e.g. women only) and then mixed groups (e.g. couples together). These sessions are mediated by HKI and partner staff. Households targeted by the project come together in various groups with a maximum of 15 to 20 people, and are invited to sessions by the project facilitators. Community leaders and local government officers are invited to encourage people's participation and reiterate messages through other community engagement activities.

In one community there are typically three groups (women, men and in-laws). This can vary depending on the context and scope of the project. For example, there could be groups of traditional leaders or other household decision makers, resulting in more than three groups in a community.

**Implementing partners**

Nurturing Connections® has been implemented both by HKI and partner organizations.

**— Local organizations**

- **Bangladesh:** Debi Chawdhurani Palli Unnayn Kendra, SKS Foundation, Friends in Village Development Bangladesh, RDRS Bangladesh, Center for Natural Resource Studies, Uttaran, Jagrata Juba Shangha, Department of Agriculture Extension.
- **Cambodia:** Village Support Group, Organization to Develop Our Village, Prom Viheathor, and government partners: Provincial Office of Women's Affairs, Provincial Office of Agriculture and Health.

**Process of and criteria for selecting facilitators/champions/mentors**

Remunerated facilitators are hired by HKI and local partner staff through an open application process. Primary criteria required include: experience in implementing food security/nutrition programmes, and gender equality and women's empowerment activities; knowledge of a specific geographical area and its socio-cultural norms; and the local language where the project is implemented.

Facilitation skills (not training) are highly desirable. Facilitators are (to the extent possible) of the same sex and age range of the peer group they are assigned to. Ideally, two facilitators cover one group, but it is also possible to have one per group. If the project allows having one dedicated set of facilitators for Nurturing Connections®, they cover two groups a day (one in the morning and one in the afternoon).

Facilitators may cover topics directly related to Nurturing Connections® only, or other topics, such as nutrition counselling.

**Training of facilitators/champions/mentors**

Nurturing Connections® capacity building programme for facilitators includes an initial 10- to 15-day training, which comprises:

- an introduction to gender equality and women's empowerment within nutrition and food security (needs and on-the-ground-approaches);
- facilitation skills (theory and practice) vs training methods;
- Nurturing Connections® activities, demonstration and practice;
- pilot testing in the field; and
- a workshop on revising activities as needed and planning implementation.

Refresher training (two days) is provided to facilitators at the end of each thematic chapter of the curriculum. The facilitators' performance is monitored regularly.

The facilitators may implement Nurturing Connections® activities directly or be trainers of other facilitators through cascade training.

## SECTION 3

## IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

**Key steps in the implementation cycle****— Step 1: Formative research**

This is not an academic study but qualitative research of gender norms and socio-cultural barriers to equality, related to specific programme areas. It is conducted by HKI within EHFP initiatives.

**— Step 2: Desk-based adaptation of the HKI Nurturing Connections® curriculum, including local language translation**

This is led by HKI in consultation with consortium/project partners.

**— Step 3: Training of facilitators and field validation (pilot-test)****— Step 4: Review and finalization of the manual****— Step 5: Sensitization about the approach with local community leaders and authorities**

Local authorities and leaders are informed of the sessions, and invited to observe where applicable. Highly sensitive topics (e.g. domestic violence) that are discussed in women's groups are first dealt with in a confidential setting without external observers.

**— Step 6: Implementation on-the-ground**

Targeted households are grouped by HKI staff based on geographical proximity (possibly within the same village). Scheduling of sessions is discussed and agreed with group participants, who receive reminders a day before the session. There are four thematic modules or 'blocks', each of which takes on average four weeks to complete (depending on the sequencing) in a series of sessions lasting 1.5-2 hours each. Projects always follow the four blocks, but the content can be reduced to the most relevant/priority activities from each block. The four modules are:

- Let's Communicate: building communication, trust and respect
- Understanding Perceptions and Gender: identifying perceptions related to gender disparities
- Negotiating Power: within the household
- Acting for Change

**— Step 7: Monitoring of facilitators and sessions, refresher training, revisions to activities as needed****Average length of the implementation cycle**

The length can vary significantly, depending on the number of sessions implemented per block and their frequency (weekly, fortnightly, or monthly). In HKI's experience, the curriculum takes from 4 to 14 months to implement all four modules.

**Graduation from the methodology**

There is a time limit to the methodology but not a graduation *per se*.

The main EHFP programme lasts for a minimum of two years. Nurturing Connections® comes in after the first six months of the project, after the initial nutrition knowledge training has been conducted and the homestead production has been set up. If there is time left in the project after the completion of Nurturing Connections®, counselling sessions continue on themes and discussions that have been more difficult to address.

## SECTION 4

## MONITORING

**Monitoring system**

HKI programme staff (including gender, nutrition and agriculture experts) and partners arrange regular field visits to monitor facilitators' performance and participants' attitudes and comprehension, and capture early signs of positive behaviour change and the challenges encountered.

Monitoring is qualitative and template forms have been developed by HKI in English, French, Khmer and Bengali. A separate qualitative and quantitative monitoring exercise is conducted for the EHFP programme and nutrition activities. A randomized control trial is being conducted in Cambodia (2019).

**Indicators****— Quantitative**

The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index indicators (WEAI, Pro-WEAI, A-WEAI) have been applied to measure impact.

**— Qualitative**

These indicators are currently under revision. Examples include:

- Level of satisfaction of the beneficiaries with Nurturing Connections® activities
- Level of quality of field implementation
- Extent to which men and women respond favourably to women's participation in agricultural production and income-generating activities
- Processes around intra-household negotiation, including sharing domestic chores among family members, decision making, control over assets and communication
- Types of role modelling for women entrepreneurs and supportive men

## SECTION 5

## BUDGET

**Main items of expenditure**

- Capacity building costs, including:
  - initial training of facilitators/trainers
  - monitoring visits by project staff
  - coaching and re-training opportunities as needed (minimum four of two days each for the full approach)
- Graphic design and printing of the manual in-country
- Implementation costs, including:
  - materials for activities (e.g. printing of pictures, cards, markers)
  - travel to project areas by facilitators
  - snacks and gifts for participants (e.g. soap bars, detergent)

**Total budget**

Not available because costs vary significantly by country and size of implementation.

**SECTION 6****RESULTS****Number of beneficiaries reached**

- Bangladesh: close to 150 000 households across multiple projects
- Cambodia: almost 3 000 households across two projects
- Côte d'Ivoire: close to 2 800 households
- Senegal: almost 400 households

**Main changes attributed to the methodology**

- **Gender-related changes**
  - Women's decision making over production and income increased
  - Increased women's ownership of assets
  - Improved spousal communication
  - Increased support by husbands for domestic tasks
  - Improved women's mobility
  - Improved women's self-esteem
  - Improved ability of women to take children to the clinic
  - Improved control by women over planting decisions and agriculture-derived income
- **Other changes**
  - More equitable sharing of nutritious foods among family members

**Key success factors and strengths of the methodology**

- Locally adapted methodology and content of activities are designed with local staff to reflect real situations in a specific context. Participants recognize themselves in the role playing and stories and engage actively in discussions.
- Engaging the key household decisions makers through the peer group sessions is critical to changing norms. Peer groups include husbands, wives and mothers-in-law, as well as community leaders, such as village chiefs.
- Using a participatory approach with games makes the curriculum fun, keeps participants interest, and ensures engagement and understanding in low-literacy settings.
- Good facilitation skills are crucial to successful implementation.
- The ability to speak the local dialect and have materials translated by someone from the given context is essential.

**Challenges and measures to overcome them**

- Resources required to hire an adequate number of people and to train them as facilitators on sensitive topics.
- Ideally, Nurturing Connections® deploys facilitators of the same sex and age range as the peer groups, but it has proven to be difficult to find experienced people with this profile, especially with respect to facilitation skills. This has required significant investments in capacity building opportunities for the facilitators, and ongoing field coaching by experienced programme staff (e.g. gender and behaviour change specialists).
- It takes time to shift gender norms in communities. HKI has experimented to check what impact can be achieved by implementing only 'core' activities (e.g. decision-making power, self-esteem topics).

## Potential for upscaling

### — Requirements to support upscaling

- Commitment by government to invest in changing norms through interventions such as Nurturing Connections®
- Commitment by community leaders to gender equality, for which Nurturing Connections® is a relevant and important approach.

### — Potential improvements

- Scaling up the entire curriculum could be challenging in terms of resource needs. Therefore the identification of its 'core' elements would be useful going forward.

### — Adaptation

Nurturing Connections® has been adapted across geographical and cultural contexts, and development programme platforms. It has been implemented in food security, health and nutrition programmes, and interventions on market development and the use of aquaculture technologies for women.

Further research could be conducted to better understand results of Nurturing Connections® related to agriculture, nutrition and other social outcomes.

Regarding methodology, there is scope to identify ways to complement face-to-face encounters with other channels to improve efficiency and impact (e.g. digital reinforcement).

## Potential for replication

### — Key enablers

- Flexible methodology
- Examples available from multiple countries and in local languages
- Documented steps for replication and guidance materials available
- Post-training coaching and monitoring to ensure quality facilitation
- Partnering with institutions capable of using results to achieve scale and sustainability.

## Sustainability of the methodology once project/external input is complete

In West Africa, HKI observed interest from influential participants to become community volunteers and continue the discussions using existing community platforms (e.g. community meetings, fairs, events).

In Bangladesh, the government has recently committed to scaling up a multisector package that includes agriculture and nutrition training and Nurturing Connections®. It is currently working with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and HKI on planning the implementation.

## SECTION 7

## RESOURCES

### Publication

- The Nurturing Connections® manual in English and French is available at [https://www.hki.org/our-impact/knowledge-resources/gender-equality#.XL\\_ldegZY2w](https://www.hki.org/our-impact/knowledge-resources/gender-equality#.XL_ldegZY2w)

### Additional resources

- Additional resources, including videos and stories are available at <https://www.hki.org/nurturing-connections-healthier-communities/>
- Impact study reports are available upon request



Sena RUSACCO – Diga District,  
Oromia-Ethiopia CC group discussion

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# 7. Community Conversations

PREPARED BY

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## SECTION 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

**Name of the methodology****Community Conversations****Countries with implementation experience****East Africa:** Ethiopia in Amhara, Oromia and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR)**Start/end date**

2013 – 2017

**Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology**

World Food Programme (WFP) in the framework of the Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme.

**Purpose of the methodology: domains of gender inequality that are addressed**

Community Conversations involve a series of dialogues among community members on deep-rooted societal norms and taboos that hinder women from actively participating in farmer organizations (primary and secondary cooperatives). The aim is to:

- promote understanding of the issues involved;
- identify and explore deeper structural issues concerning women's participation, benefits and control;
- create better understanding of discriminatory practices, their different manifestations and their impacts on daily life; and
- mutually learn and decide on what should be done.

Community members engaged in the discussion are also expected to come up with solutions to address problems that have been identified and stimulate change, with the aim of sustaining and expanding these solutions.

**Contribution of the methodology to wider development/organizational/project goals**

Farmer organizations in this context are primary and secondary multipurpose cooperatives that are participating in marketing activities. One of the objectives of the P4P gender programme is to boost the participation of women in farmer organizations selling maize to WFP through the P4P programme. At the outset of the programme, the number of women in the primary cooperatives was insignificant. For this reason, women-based Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs) were established and, after business skill training, Community Conversations implemented integrated functional adult literacy and other economic empowerment programmes. All members of SACCOs became members of primary cooperatives and started to take part in the management committees of primary and secondary (unions) cooperatives.

The P4P gender programme assumes that economic empowerment interventions together with continuous engagement on norms governing gendered practices contribute to women's ownership, control and benefits from resources and their social empowerment. This enables women to benefit from P4P initiatives that target smallholder farmers.

The process of Community Conversations serves as mobilizing factor and the main pillar for all other project components, such as business skill training, revolving fund and income generating activities, integrated functional adult literacy, the provision of time- and energy-saving technologies, and exposure visits to successful women's organizations and individuals.

**Target group**

- Women belonging to SACCOs
- Rural women farmers who are poor (with low income)
- Female-headed households
- Young dropouts from school and educational programmes
- The target group are at least 18 years old and reside in the functional area of target primary cooperatives

## SECTION 2

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

**Key entry points for applying the methodology**

The key entry points are village-level group community gatherings.

Each discussion group comprises 25 women from the SACCOs, plus their husbands, community elders, religious leaders, grassroots-level administration leaders, justice representatives, women's association leaders, development agents, health extension worker, teachers and family members of the targeted women.

The total number of participants in one discussion group is between 50 to 60 people.

**Implementing partners**

This work is implemented and monitored by regional- and district-level government officers (Women and Children Affairs Bureau and Cooperative Promotion Agency) who select the facilitators, run the training of trainers' sessions and set up the groups.

**Process of and criteria for selecting facilitators/champions/mentors**

An equal number of women and men (six in total) were selected to act as facilitators from each SACCO by the administration of the kebele (the smallest administrative unit of Ethiopia) together with SACCO leaders and district-level officers. The selection was based on:

- good conduct and acceptance by the community;
- completion of at least an 8th grade education;
- ability to communicate in local languages; and
- willingness to volunteer to take training of trainers' sessions and conduct Community Conversations at the grassroots level.

Women members of the targeted SACCOs and local government employees who meet the criteria were also given the opportunity to act as facilitators. The facilitators were not remunerated.

**Training of facilitators/champions/mentors**

The major topics covered during the gender-focused training of trainers are:

- introduction, setting ground rules and reflection;
- building relationships;
- identification of concerns by participants that challenge their daily lives;
- exploration of concerns;
- the division of labour, asset creation, ownership and transfer;
- identification of assets and resources (human, material and financial) that already exist in the community;
- decision making and actions by the community and family members; and
- reflection and review.

The training of facilitators is given by consultants/government staff for three to five days and refreshed annually.

**SECTION 3****IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE****Key steps in the implementation cycle**

- **Step 1 Review of manual and selection of facilitators**
  - This step is taken care of by WFP and regional government implementing partners.
  - The Community Conversation manual is reviewed and adapted to the local context and translated into regional languages by gender consultants.
  - Criteria are set for the selection of facilitators.
  - Facilitators for training are selected.
- **Step 2 Training of trainers**
  - The training of facilitators is carried out and includes their self-assessment of issues. During the training, they identify practical cases that they are observing in their communities.
  - Timetable/action plans are prepared and submitted.
  - Logistical support is arranged.
- **Step 3 Community Conversations**
  - Community Conversation groups are formed from existing SACCOs and dates are fixed for meetings at the village level. The groups usually meet once a month with the number of meetings dropping to once every two months when the members are more engaged in seasonal agricultural work.
  - The meetings are conducted in a participatory way and the minutes of the day are taken.
  - Discussion starts with a review of the results of the self-assessment undertaken by the facilitators to see whether there are any additional issues to consider. The space is then open for dialogue and action related to women and their place in their household and society (e.g. norms regarding women’s mobility, division of tasks, leadership, decision making, ownership).
  - Major decisions are noted and observances are made among the community members to determine whether changes are taking place at the household level. This is done through feedback at the meetings and random visits to households.
  - During the regular SACCO meetings, there is the opportunity to discuss the Community Conversation progress, exchange experiences between different Community Conversation groups and appreciate the positive work that has been done.
- **Step 4 Review**
  - An assessment is undertaken of impacts in the families and at the community level.
  - Impact reports are finalized.

**Average length of the implementation cycle**

- One to two years, during which time there will be 12 to 18 conversations

**Graduation from the methodology**

Once the participants identify the major challenges that hinder women’s participation in economic and social affairs and the decisions that have been taken are implemented, the conversation ends until participants identify another issue to resolve in similar way. After resolving the main issues, the meetings start to decline but the experience and procedures are in place and can be used if necessary.

**SECTION 4****MONITORING****Monitoring system**

- Internal by participants
  - All sub-groups of women check their progress as a household and at the community level. They monitor decisions on family assets and the sharing of the work burden, and note whether the husbands allow their wives to participate in SACCOs and income-generating activities, and whether men assist the women and accept women being able to bring in additional income to the family.
- External by relevant government departments and WFP
  - Quarterly reports, field monitoring and an independent consultant's evaluation based on pre- and post-baseline surveys.

**Indicators**

- **Quantitative**
  - Number of the target women, their family members and the community participating in the conversations, who were convinced about the importance of the issues and are now addressing them in practice.
- **Qualitative**
  - Impacts related to economically empowering women, strengthening their decision-making capacity, and increasing their participation in household affairs and leadership positions.

**SECTION 5****BUDGET****Main items of expenditure**

- Consultants' fee for preparing the manual and providing the facilitator training
- Translation and duplication of manuals
- Training of trainer costs
- Stationery, facilitation and motivation costs (e.g. coffee and bread to make attendance more attractive)
- Monitoring and outcome assessment

The main budget is for the preparation of the Community Conversation manual and the training of facilitators. Budgets at the group level are only to maintain the discussion by covering stationery and refreshments.

**Total budget**

Specific costs associated with Community Conversation activities were USD 25 000 to USD 30 000, including manual development and training (i.e. approximately USD 1 500 to USD 1 800 direct costs per group). In addition, other costs (e.g. monitoring and overhead), were covered by the overall programme on women's economic empowerment.

## SECTION 6

## RESULTS

**Number of beneficiaries reached**

- Direct beneficiaries: 444 women members and around 1 900 others including: husbands of the women, elders, religious leaders, grassroots-level justice leaders, head of women associations, kebele-level leaders, managers, development agents, cooperative organizers, health agents, teachers and family members of the targeted women.

**Main changes attributed to the methodology**

The beneficiaries rated Community Conversations as the major means by which most of the meaningful changes materialized. The economic empowerment components of the programme would not have been successful without this activity. Engaging husbands and children to address discriminatory gendered practices unlocked the potential for other areas of intervention.

Community Conversations raised the awareness of community members and contributed to significant results in economic gains and changes in gendered norms that have hindered women from advancing in their lives. Changes include:

- Husbands have started to share household work (e.g. fetching water and collecting fuelwood, attending to children while their wives are busy with other activities).
- Ownership and decision making by women regarding common property has been enhanced.
- Girls and boys are treated equally and start to participate in home activities without discrimination.
- Women can join SACCOs, whereas initially some husbands prevented their wives from doing so.
- Men have been convinced to accept women as being able to bring in additional income to the family, and to plan and work together with women.
- Most women become members of a primary cooperative and are involved in management positions.
- Women start to supply produce (maize) to their primary cooperative in their own name.
- Women are able to contribute to household expenses and school costs, which enables children to attend school. Previously their access to finance and assets was limited, and most waited for their husband's handouts, even to cover small expenses.

Other benefits:

- Household income and nutrition has increased.

**Key success factors and strengths of the methodology**

- It combines a social and economic problem-solving approach.
- Different government implementing partners are engaged in improving women's lives. Responsibility for Community Conversation activities is given to the Women and Children Affairs Bureau, while the Cooperative Promotion Agency support SACCOs.
- It is simple, adaptive and can be implemented at a reasonable cost.
- The intended results are seen right away. Women's training, exposure visits and access to finance often result in immediate and practical changes at the household level. The targeted women were among the poorest of the poor, and the changes observed had an influence on most of their husbands.
- The practice is irreversible. Most women have started to defend their rights. Their husbands now believe that some values and traditions were not helping them and tied their families to poverty. When people heard of the changes, they started to regret the way they had previously spent their time. The position of women has become stronger economically and socially as their husbands and community start to pay attention to addressing gender inequalities. At the family level, children have also realized the burden borne by their mother and have started to assist her.
- It is the master key for realizing other empowerment components.
- Although there has not been any experience of changes being reversed, it is felt that the SACCOs would be able to handle these cases.

### Challenges and measures to overcome them

The major challenges were budget shortages for follow-up activities and difficulties in coordinating different government sector offices around one activity. This was resolved by securing additional budget and working untiringly on coordination challenges.

### Potential for upscaling

Requirements to support upscaling:

- Budget, preparation of manuals, experiences of implementing partners, existence of practical cases for experience sharing
- Existence of gender-related problems to be addressed in the community, willingness of implementing partners to take part in the programme, and tangible positive impacts
- Potential improvements:
- Trained and experienced government staff to scale up the practice in other places
- Adaptation:
- The manual and experience has been adapted to another 21 SACCOs by WFP and recently practiced in 10 women's SACCOs (3 000 women members) of the Joint Programme to Accelerate Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE).

### Potential for replication

Key enablers

- Budget, manuals, training and follow-up with coordinated economic empowerment components of committed government implementing partners

### Sustainability of the methodology once project/external input is complete

Once the methodology starts to work, it establishes new norms and shapes cultural attitudes in the family and the community.

Implementing partners are using it as an essential tool for resolving similar community issues.

P4P programme has phased out the methodology, but government partners are using it for other programme interventions.

## SECTION 7

## RESOURCES

### Publications

- WFP (2014) Community Conversation facilitators' manual on women's participation, control and benefits in farmer organizations  
<https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000110657/download/>
- P4P Gender (Livelihood Support for Rural Women) Outcome Assessment Report (October 2017) (available upon request).





Dimitra Clubs from Yaisonge,  
Tshopo Province, Democratic  
Republic of Congo

©Christiane Monsieur

# 8. Dimitra Clubs

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## SECTION 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

**Name of the methodology****Dimitra Clubs****Countries with implementation experience**

- **West and Central Africa:** Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Senegal
- **Soon:** Cambodia, Ecuador, Kenya, Liberia and Malawi

**Start/end date**

2008 – ongoing

**Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology**

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

**Purpose of the methodology and the domains of gender inequality that are addressed**

The Dimitra Clubs are a community-driven approach that facilitates socio-economic empowerment, women's leadership and self-help. They are informal groups of rural women and men (single sex or mixed) who decide to join together on a voluntary basis to identify their common problems and solve them using local resources.

The approach is dynamic and based on community mobilization and engagement, communication, dialogue, and collective action. It focuses on developing social capital and promoting human development to ensure no one is left behind. In this process, rural women and men are the main drivers of their own development.

This transformative approach contributes to gender equality and improve rural livelihoods by addressing different domains of gender inequality in rural areas, including:

- power relations;
- women's work burden;
- women's agency;
- women and girls' participation in local decision-making processes and governance;
- roles and relations (positive masculinities);
- women's leadership and voice in communities, households and organizations;
- access to information and to information and communication technologies (ICTs), including community radios (still the most popular media in isolated rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa);
- access to economic opportunities; and
- young women's empowerment.

**Contribution of the methodology to wider development/organizational/project goals**

The approach triggers social transformations that result in more resilient rural communities and stronger and more gender-sensitive and inclusive rural organizations. In addition, the clubs promote collective action, good governance, the transparency and accountability of rural institutions. They also contribute to the specific objectives of the projects in which they are embedded. Today the approach is a component in over 30 joint programmes and initiatives addressing a wide range of development issues (e.g. nutrition, resilience, climate change, gender equality, peace-building, social protection).

**Target group**

There is no specific targeting at village level; all community members, women and men, are invited to join the clubs voluntarily.

In countries where the composition of Dimitra Clubs is sex-homogenous (e.g. West Africa in general) there are at least five Dimitra Clubs per village (two for women, one for men, one for young women and one for young men). In countries where communities have chosen to be in mixed clubs, there is a gender balance in terms of club membership and leadership.



## SECTION 2

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

**Key entry points for applying the methodology**

The main entry point is the rural community or village. The villages/sites are always identified by the decentralized authorities together with staff working on the project in which the Dimitra Clubs component is being implemented.

The Dimitra Clubs are enablers for the communities to influence their environment by improving communication, dialogue, governance, participation and engagement, and community mobilization. Apart from a wind-up and solar-powered radio set, which is sometimes accompanied with a mobile phone, they receive no financial or material incentive.

Rural radios stations are involved as key partners from the outset. They are used to broadcast club information and debates, and promote the sharing of experiences and networking. Radio stations are not provided with any financial resources, but their representatives are often invited to participate in the training workshops in order to better understand the Dimitra Club approach, and their own role and participation in the process. The role of the radio station is to disseminate good practices, synthesise the debates of the clubs and sometimes organize debates on specific issues with experts (e.g. nutrition). The radio stations enable rural women and men to have a voice in the media, and the staff are often trained to become more gender-responsive in their work.

**Implementing partners**

The approach is implemented by local partners (e.g. civil society organizations, farmer organizations or government service units) depending on the context. The selection of the local implementing partners is based on calls for proposals. The selection criteria include:

- knowledge of and strong presence in the geographical area of intervention;
- capacity to deploy local facilitators (including women) who have experience in working or living in the community and knowledge of the local language (essential); and
- experience with and sensitivity to social aspects of rural development (i.e. gender equality, human rights and community development).

Other actors including traditional, religious and administrative authorities and government services (e.g. extension), community radio stations, the private sector and other development agencies play an important role in creating an enabling environment.

**Process of and criteria for selecting facilitators/champions/mentors**

Facilitators are hired by the partner organization. Each facilitator is responsible for covering between six and ten villages, depending on geographical distance and the number of clubs per village. Gender parity in the recruitment of facilitators is recommended. The attitude of the facilitators is key. They need to facilitate the process without exercising (too much) influence and ensure that the principles and features of the clubs are well understood and internalized. They do not directly facilitate the club meetings but provide advice and support to the two leaders (per club).

During the process of club formation, natural leaders emerge. They are considered temporary at the beginning but might be 'confirmed' as leaders by the group or changed. Generally, club leadership is rotational, in order to give everyone the opportunity to experience leadership. In some countries, leaders are called 'moderators' because they facilitate or moderate the sessions and the overall 'life' of their clubs. Importantly, being a leader does not mean exercising power over the discussions or decisions but facilitating the process.

**Training of facilitators/champions/mentors**

Once selected, the local partners and their facilitators participate in a multi-step process of training-action conducted by FAO Dimitra Club experts. This training focuses on the critical operational aspects of the Dimitra Clubs and the guiding principles of the approach (e.g. participation, inclusive action).

During the first four months, there are two main phases in the training and coaching of the facilitators, each of which lasts five days. Topics include principles and functioning of the approach, conflict resolution, gender and media, gender in rural life and group dynamics. Ad hoc training, proximity and distance coaching and supervision by FAO continue over the rest of the process (18 to 24 months).

## SECTION 3

## IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

**Key steps in the implementation cycle**

Following the facilitator and supervisor training, the following steps are carried out at the village level by the implementing partners.

**— Step 1: Sensitization and group formation**

The approach and its main principles are explained to all women and men in local communities. These sessions, which include traditional and religious chiefs, are crucial to ensure the buy-in of the communities and their representatives.

The clubs are established during this first step. Each club has between 20 to 30 members, who often also belong to other associations or groups. Context-specific cultural factors will determine the way the clubs are structured (i.e. the sex and age of members, and whether membership is homogenous or mixed).

The facilitators give a short introduction on the methodology. They focus on what is a challenge or problem, how to identify the common challenges/problems at the village level and how to discuss them. The Dimitra Club members begin discussing these in the following weeks. This first step can take from three hours to two days depending on the context.

The approach is flexible. Each club decides:

- its governance structure (e.g. representatives and leaders, advisers, treasurer if any);
- its way of functioning (e.g. name, vision, sequence of meetings);
- the themes to tackle and share with other clubs (if any), and members identify and agree on the most pressing ‘problems’ to resolve; and
- the strategy to adopt and implement to solve the problem.

**— Step 2: Training and coaching for club leaders**

After a period in which each Dimitra Club has learned to effectively operate as a club with support from facilitators (perhaps twice a month), the club leaders participate in a training workshop conducted by the implementing partner or FAO. This workshop enables them to gain in-depth understanding of the key principles underpinning the approach, facilitation techniques, governance structure, the identification and prioritization of problems, the analysis of problems and the functioning of the clubs.

Leaders then have a key role in organizing specific sessions with their club to share what they have learnt during the training.

**— Step 3: The life of the clubs**

The clubs are now well equipped to operate effectively. Members engage in participatory discussions to identify and prioritize the main problems to be resolved and take action. In some cases (e.g. in Niger) the results of clubs’ discussions are shared with the wider community during village assemblies or meetings. This informs the entire community about the analysis of the problems and the suggested options for addressing them. The traditional leaders can then mediate and recommend the best solutions to be implemented by the clubs or the community.

Clubs are provided with solar-powered radio sets, sometimes paired with simple mobile phones (up to two per village) connected into a fleet. At present not all the clubs are provided with mobile phones because of the costs and problems of connectivity in isolated rural areas.

Often, the local facilitating partner encourages linkages between the clubs and the community radio stations, for example, inviting broadcasters to the village to interview women and men on their achievements. Alternatively, radio stations and the clubs establish their own partnership agreements with local broadcasters and communicate through mobile phones.

The clubs can also organize meetings with local experts on thematic areas (e.g. agriculture) or other issues (e.g. early marriage).

**— Step 4: Regular support to the clubs**

The implementing partner (facilitator) provides support for a total period of 18 months, including regular visits (twice a month or as needed) in the first 6 months and less frequently thereafter.

### — Step 5: Forum

A forum is held after at least one year after the establishment of the clubs. It lasts for one or two days and is attended by at least two representatives from each club. These fora are generally regional and provide a good opportunity for the clubs and stakeholders to learn and assess the work done (in a sense they are a self-assessment). Usually they are organized by FAO in collaboration with key line ministries. They are attended by representatives from government institutions, local authorities, United Nations organizations and donors. Members of the clubs share their achievements.

### Average length of the implementation cycle

Evidence has shown that after 18 to 24 months clubs are sufficiently well developed and operational to run without facilitator support.

### Graduation from the methodology

Specific graduation does not apply in this approach. Once the clubs are active and functioning, their members develop individual capacities (e.g. problem solving, dynamism, citizenship, self-confidence and self-esteem) and become key drivers for change at the community level. This role is recognized by the community and the traditional authorities.

The Dimitra Clubs in Niger have decided that in order to be considered ‘well-functioning’, a Club should meet at least three of the following criteria: (i) regular meetings; (ii) existence of activities (or specific themes discussed); (iii) problem-solving capacity; (iv) existence of practical results; (v) presence of a common cash; (vi) existence of a dedicated board (club’s internal governance and respect of responsibilities); (vii) cohesion and inclusion experienced by members; and (viii) respect of internal rules.

There are currently eight “certified” specialists of the Dimitra Clubs’ methodology (five in sub-Saharan Africa and three at global level), who provide advice and methodological options, in addition to training, coaching and backstopping, to the countries/projects implementing the approach. A certification process of the Dimitra Clubs facilitators is underway.

## SECTION 4

## MONITORING

### Monitoring system

Different tools and processes are used to monitor the results and impact of the approach.

#### — Community level

In some countries there is a ‘bureau’ of Dimitra Clubs who register the themes discussed, solutions found and actions taken.

#### — Dimitra Clubs’ level

Most clubs record their processes. It is necessary and important not only to take stock and assess the results of the clubs but also the learning opportunities derived by the members who engage in a self-evaluation process of their functioning and activities.

#### — Implementing participants

There is periodic collection of stories (e.g. number of clubs by community, membership information disaggregated by sex and age, themes discussed, actions taken, achievements realized).

#### — FAO and external

- A database of the Dimitra Clubs by the country, region and project, includes information on the total number of members disaggregated by sex and age
- On-going design of a monitoring and learning framework, including qualitative and quantitative indicators
- Qualitative studies and stocktaking exercises carried out to measure results and impact
- Case studies

## Indicators

### — Quantitative

- Number of functioning Dimitra Clubs that have been established with membership statistics disaggregated by sex and age
- Number of people (disaggregated by sex) whose skills and capacities have improved thanks to the Dimitra Clubs model (disaggregated by group, clubs' leaders and facilitators, project, government and FAO staff, radio stations, implementing partners and Dimitra Clubs' experts)
- Number of clubs members (disaggregated by sex and age)
- Number of women and men clubs leaders
- Number of communal Dimitra Clubs Networks
- Number of ICT tools (solar-powered radios and mobile phones) distributed disaggregated by sex composition of the groups

### — Qualitative

- Evidence that women's agency, self-esteem and voice have improved at community, organisation and household levels as a result of their participation in Dimitra Clubs
- Perceptions by local authorities and traditional chiefs of the changes in social dynamics triggered by Dimitra Clubs
- Scoring the perceptions of women and men club members (e.g. do they feel they have become influencers in the decision-making processes of their communities)
- Evidence that Dimitra Clubs act as mediators for conflict resolution
- Scoring women's perception of changes that improve their status (see below);
- Scoring men's perceptions in improvements in women's participation in local decision making (see list below);
- Anecdotal material and perceptions of behavioural changes for gender equality:
  - Men's behaviour changes (e.g. do they undertake tasks traditionally assigned to women)
  - Women are not ashamed to speak up in public and look people in the eyes
  - Food taboos are abandoned
  - Cases of early forced marriage are reduced
  - There is a decrease in gender-based violence (GBV) as a taboo (i.e. more women see it as a violation and speak about it)
  - There is an increase in women reporting cases of GBV
  - Men view GBV negatively

## SECTION 5

## BUDGET

### Main items of expenditure

- Letters of agreement with partners in the field, which includes all the work related to field-level activities (e.g. sensitization, series of training sessions and the entire capacity development process at different levels)
- Inception phase workshop to launch the initiative
- One forum of Dimitra Clubs to exchange, analyse and assess experiences and achievements (concluding phase)
- ICTs, specifically wind-up and solar-powered radios and mobile phones
- South-South cooperation initiatives
- Training, coaching, follow-up and backstopping support by FAO Dimitra Clubs International Coordination and experts to follow the whole process
- Monitoring and evaluation and impact assessments

### Total budget

It is estimated that the total cost of supporting a Dimitra Club for a period of 18 months is about USD 1 500. This sum, equivalent to USD 50 per member, covers the services provided by the implementing partners (e.g. NGOs) and training/coaching by FAO.



## SECTION 6

## RESULTS

**Number of beneficiaries reached**

The approach is embedded in over 30 FAO field development projects. In 2020, there are almost 6 000 Dimitra Clubs with about 180 000 members (60% women) in eight countries of sub-Saharan Africa. It is estimated that more than six million people have been positively impacted by the clubs in their communities.

**Main changes attributed to the methodology**

Impacts are seen at individual, household, organisation and community levels.

The activities carried out by the Dimitra Clubs trigger social transformations that gradually lead to changes in behaviours and social norms that would otherwise prevent women from progressing on an equal basis as men. The clubs boost the self-esteem and leadership of rural women and encourage more equitable power relations between women and men, which improve the quality of life of rural households and smallholder farmers. Many rural communities have reduced harmful practices (e.g. GBV) and improved rural women's access to decision-making processes at the local level.

**— Gender transformative changes**

- Breaking food taboos in favour of better nutrition for women and children
- Combating girls and women's early marriage and GBV
- Improving girls' school enrolment and recognition of their rights
- Improving dialogue between women and men at the household and community levels, including in conflict situations
- Changes in gender norms and relations, including between generations
- Reducing women's work burden
- Improving women and girls' communication skills, confidence, self-esteem, and their capacity to speak in public, act as role models, become elected in local institutions and operate as peace mediators
- Enhancing women's participation as leaders in decision-making processes at community and district levels and in rural institutions and farmers organisations
- Increasing women's opportunities to generate income

**— Other areas of change**

Nutrition, climate change adaptation in agriculture, resilience, social cohesion and peace building are all areas where changes are experienced.

**— Communities**

As a result of the clubs, rural communities become more organized and resilient. They move away from being mere recipients of external aid to becoming agents of change.

**— Institutions**

As club members reinforce their problem-solving skills and self-confidence, they create their own or join formal organizations in leadership positions, which makes these organizations more inclusive and gender-responsive.

**— District level and local administrative authorities**

The clubs or networks of Dimitra Clubs interact regularly with local authorities. This creates an enabling environment for improved citizenship, local governance, social cohesion, collective action and accountability.

**— Policy environment**

The Dimitra Programme provides policy advice to country line ministries on the adoption and integration of gender transformative approaches in their policies, strategies and programmes to fight poverty and hunger.

## Key success factors and strengths of the methodology

Key success factors and strengths of the methodology include:

- flexible approach that can be adapted to any context and is easily replicable;
- cost efficiency;
- easy integration as a component into any rural development project in any thematic area;
- first concrete and visible results are obtained after a few weeks of implementation and impact is achieved after a few months;
- the sustainability of Dimitra Clubs beyond the life of the project; and
- full ownership of the approach by the communities and by the authorities.

The strengths of the approach relate to four features:

### — Inclusive participation

All members, regardless of their sex and social status, have the opportunity to make themselves heard. The clubs stimulate the active and voluntary participation of many actors in the community, even if they are not club members. Examples of this participation include engaging in community works (e.g. building a health centre) or respecting the decisions taken in village assemblies (e.g. not marrying young girls) that have been endorsed by chiefs. People who are not part of formal organizations and who often belong to the most vulnerable and marginalized groups are able to engage in a group activity and participate in the discussions.

### — Gender transformative approach

The clubs pay special attention in their debates to the power imbalances that discriminate against women. The discussions highlight the consequences of discrimination and the local solutions that can be implemented by the community. The community assemblies are encouraged to discuss and collectively challenge discriminatory social norms and behaviours, and legitimize new positive ones. Given that the root causes of gender inequalities are found in entrenched discriminatory attitudes and social norms, triggering changes at the community level has a strong impact on transforming gender dynamics also at household and organization levels.

### — Communication and use of ICTs

In isolated rural areas, the main access to information is through the rural community radio. Through partnerships established with community radio stations, the experiences, debates and stories of the Dimitra Clubs inspire other communities, and the voice of the rural people, particularly women and youth, is heard, which encourages the replication of activities. Mobile phones are becoming increasingly important, and are used as a driver for women's empowerment and a training and information tool for the networks of facilitators.

### — Community-led and community mobilization and engagement

The clubs encourage their members and communities to play an active role in development and systematically analyse their problems. This process strengthens people's problem-solving and communication skills, and collective action becomes the best way to find solutions and overcome challenges.

## Challenges and measures to overcome them

### — Methodological

- The Dimitra Clubs is a genuine bottom-up approach that is based on the voluntary participation of rural communities. Apart from a solar-powered radio and mobile phones no other kind of compensation or incentive is provided. Sometimes this strategy is not easy to understand for rural communities that are used to receiving inputs and services from aid organizations.
- The Dimitra Clubs decide the priorities and challenges they want to address. Sometimes these do not align with the priorities of development organizations. To overcome this, the clubs are invited to have various 'baskets' of discussions (e.g. their own, the partners' and one dedicated to emergencies).
- It takes time to see transformational changes. People need to follow a process of change. By knowing each other better, creating group identity and enhancing their capacities to discuss and analyse, they start to tackle issues that were previously unthinkable to discuss openly. Technical and backstopping support is vital for 18 to 24 months to ensure that the clubs move

beyond infrastructural or material changes (e.g. sanitation) towards behavioural dimensions. Project coordinators need to be convinced about the importance of investing in and completing the process, including the support of national and international Dimitra Club experts.

- Gender transformative changes are difficult to measure. The Dimitra Programme is working hard to develop, test and harmonize specific, measurable, attributable, reliable and time-bound (SMART) indicators for monitoring and learning.
- Local women facilitators are not easy to find in areas where discriminatory social norms prevent them from carrying out this role. Strategies involving universities are being used to address this issue.

#### — Strategic

- There is a lack of awareness in the development community about the utility and importance of non-standard gender mainstreaming approaches for tackling both the underlying causes of gender discrimination and also issues of rural development.
- Key national and international institutions might be interested in the approach, but practical support is not always possible, probably because it is too different from the ‘business as usual’ development practices.
- Regarding the benefits of this approach, it is more difficult to achieve a shift in the mindset of development agents in capital cities (i.e. bureaucrats and policy makers) than at the field level.
- The lack of long-term and continued funding is a challenge, particularly for guaranteeing the coordination of activities at the global level and human resources at the local level.

### Potential for upscaling

#### — Potential improvements

- Develop SMART indicators for the monitoring and learning of the approach
- Increase the collaboration of development actors in evaluating results and impact
- Create and establish a network or community of certified experts on the approach at the international level that will support efforts to expand, replicate, improve and adapt the approach, particularly to support new work in English-speaking countries
- Strengthen partnerships with:
  - the private sector, particularly regarding ICTs
  - universities, research institutions and partners at the national level to undertake impact studies
- Advocate for the recognition of key areas of the Dimitra Programme’s work (social mobilization, participation, community engagement and empowerment and gender equality) to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and truly “leave no one behind”

### Potential for replication

The approach, which is very flexible and underpinned by the basic guiding principles, is being implemented in various contexts, from remote communities in post-conflict contexts to refugee camps.

To replicate the Dimitra Clubs in different contexts, key enabling factors include:

- The main implementing partner must have expertise on gender, knowledge of the context, be able to deploy local facilitators at village level and willing to work ‘differently’ with the rural community and with the right attitude.
- FAO Dimitra Programme needs to spend time on sensitization and advocacy to ensure buy-in at different levels from project coordinators, implementing partners (including partners within FAO and United Nations), government officials and key line ministries, as well as rural communities.
- A baseline study is necessary to (i) understand community dynamics, gender inequalities, women’s leadership, social capital, infrastructural aspects and the causes of rural isolation of rural communities, and (ii) adapt the approach accordingly.

An alliance between the FAO Farmer Field Schools and the Dimitra Clubs has been consolidated in Niger and Senegal in the framework of projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

## Sustainability of the methodology once project/external input is complete

In 80% of cases, the Dimitra Clubs continue after the end of support as they are not driven by external forces. Empowerment comes from within. The Dimitra Clubs are a driver for local development and improvements in the quality of life, including gender roles and relations. This continuity is linked to the philosophy of the approach. The Dimitra Clubs show that both women and men have not only the capacities to act, participate in local governance and make their voices heard, but are also willing to be real agents of change.

The Dimitra Club approach considers men as key stakeholders in the process of change and includes other community-level actors (e.g. customary and religious chiefs and local authorities). Changing behaviours requires the participation of the entire community. While discussions may start in single-sex groups, all clubs share their proposals and thoughts about a specific subject with the whole community. The community debate on the best solutions to solve the problem legitimizes the clubs' solutions and triggers acceptable changes at individual, household and community levels.

## SECTION 7

## RESOURCES

### Publications

- *Dimitra Newsletter 30, Special Edition: Dimitra Clubs in Action* (FAO-Dimitra 2019)
  - English: <http://www.fao.org/3/i7865en/i7865en.pdf>
  - French: <http://www.fao.org/3/i7865fr/i7865fr.pdf>
- *Communicating Gender for Rural Development, Integrating gender in communication for development* (FAO-Dimitra, 2011)
  - English: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/am319e/am319e00.pdf>
  - French: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/am319f/am319f00.pdf>
- *Community listeners' clubs: stepping stones for action in rural areas* (FAO-Dimitra, 2011)
  - English: <http://www.fao.org/dimitra/dimitra-publications/publications>
  - French: [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/dimitra/pdf/clubs\\_d\\_ecoute\\_2011\\_fr\\_light.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/dimitra/pdf/clubs_d_ecoute_2011_fr_light.pdf)

### Briefs

- *Dimitra Clubs: A unique approach* (FAO-Dimitra, 2013)
  - English: [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/dimitra/pdf/fiche\\_cec\\_2013\\_en.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/dimitra/pdf/fiche_cec_2013_en.pdf)
  - French: [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/dimitra/pdf/fiche\\_cec\\_2013\\_fr.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/dimitra/pdf/fiche_cec_2013_fr.pdf)
- *Community listeners' clubs empower rural women and men* (FAO Partnering for results series)
  - Arabic: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i2940a/i2940a14.pdf>
  - Chinese: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i2940c/i2940c14.pdf>
  - English: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i2940e/i2940e14.pdf>
  - French: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i2940f/i2940f14.pdf>
  - Russian: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i2940r/i2940r14.pdf>
  - Spanish: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i2940s/i2940s14.pdf>

### Website

- *Dimitra Clubs, What's the impact* (in six FAO official languages)  
<http://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1200214/>

## Videos

- Stepping stones for action in rural areas – Democratic Republic of Congo and Niger (7'22)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzyYvlbPao8&index=1&list=PLzp5NgJ2-dK6OBbZpPuTMn\\_7wSrclUE0l](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzyYvlbPao8&index=1&list=PLzp5NgJ2-dK6OBbZpPuTMn_7wSrclUE0l)
- Access to Water and Land – Niger (6'34)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9OwqupVuDM&feature=youtu.be>
- Food Security and Nutrition – Democratic Republic of Congo (6'53)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHG07gQ2H8Q&feature=youtu.be>
- Community Mobilization – Democratic Republic of Congo and Niger (6'20)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixZOJd0b55w&feature=youtu.be>
- Women leaders – Democratic Republic of Congo and Niger (6'50)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6cPjEYzC8l&feature=youtu.be>
- Dimitra Clubs and Farmer Field Schools produced by German international broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW)
  - <http://www.dw.com/en/senegal-listening-instead-of-looking-away/av-41610558>
  - <http://www.dw.com/en/in-senegal-and-west-africa-villages-fight-climate-change/a-41654815>
  - <http://www.dw.com/en/young-voices-for-senegals-villages/av-41605270>
- Dimitra Clubs, Stepping Stones towards Climate Change Resilient Communities in Rural Senegal  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7aWWtDbI5Y>





Henry Kazisonga from Kamwana village TA Dzoole in Dowa District – taking care of a baby whilst the woman cooks

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# 9. Farmers' Field and Business Schools

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## SECTION 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

**Name of the methodology****Farmers' Field and Business Schools (FFBS)****Countries with implementation experience**

- **East and Southern Africa:** Ethiopia, Malawi, United Republic of Tanzania
- **West Africa:** Ghana, Mali
- **Asia:** Bangladesh, India

**Start/end date**

1 November 2011 – 31 December 2018

**Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology**

- CARE USA together with CARE International in various countries
- Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Margaret Ann Cargill Foundation (Ghana, Malawi and Mali only) and some individual givers

**Purpose of the methodology and the domains of gender inequality that are addressed**

The FFBS integrated gender transformative capacity building model for food and nutrition security involves building agency, transforming structures and changing relations in accordance with CARE's Gender Equality and Women's Voice Framework. It focuses on five domains:

- increased capacity and skills;
- expanded access to services, assets and inputs;
- increased productivity, profitability and nutrition;
- increased influence of women over household decisions, assets and incomes; and
- an environment that is better able to foster gender equity, both within communities and in extension and market systems.

The FFBS approach can be packaged into a comprehensive programme, such as Pathways, that has components dealing with agriculture, markets, nutrition, women's empowerment, and participatory monitoring and evaluation. However, it is flexible and can include other innovative elements depending on the context and challenges.

The integration of these components into the agricultural seasonal cycle is a key feature of the FFBS. This integration ensures that knowledge skills and practices of women farmers can be built upon when relevant and in a timely manner.

**Contribution of the methodology to wider development/organizational/project goals**

The FFBS is CARE's flagship implementation model for women's empowerment, agriculture, food security and climate. It has been implemented by CARE at the community level. So far, over 30 CARE projects in 16 countries (including both Pathways and non-Pathways countries) have implemented parts of, or the full, FFBS as a model. These projects, which have a value of USD 450 million, have reached 9 million beneficiaries in over 10 000 communities.

The FFBS model is the foundation of CARE's new programmatic framework for food and nutrition security, 'She Feeds the World', which provides programming guidance on food and water systems across the CARE International Confederation.

**Target group**

The selection of the target group should include a set of key socio-demographic characteristics that best define various types of rural smallholder households. Combinations of these characteristics are important determinants in the paths that different types of households take toward more secure and resilient livelihoods.

A FFBS group comprises about 100 farmers, of whom 75-85% are women; however, not all groups include men.

Some characteristics of a typical woman smallholder and her household for direct engagement could include:

- an income of less than USD 2 per day per capita;
- food shortages for part of the year;
- little, no or marginal land for cultivation;
- current production goals that are mainly for consumption, with small amounts being sold commercially;
- little or no control and influence by women over income and farming decisions; and
- significant agricultural labour constraints (often women-headed households).

## SECTION 2

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

### Key entry points for applying the methodology

The FFBS draws its members from pre-existing groups, such as Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), self-help groups, producer groups and peer groups. Farmers (mostly women) cultivating similar crops or engaged in a particular value chain are brought together to form a FFBS. Members of a FFBS could come from more than one VSLA, self-help group or producer group.

As the custodians of traditions, community leaders (e.g. traditional chiefs, religious leaders) play a key role as focal points for discussions on social norms. Male role models and change champions are also critical for the FFBS components that engage men.

Local administration (district assemblies, frontline extension agents and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also provide important entry points based on their knowledge of the local context and norms.

### Implementing partners

Partners that FFBS could engage with include:

- national government departments (e.g. Ministries of Agriculture and Food Security, Gender, Health) for providing technical expertise and scaling up of FFBS;
- local governments (e.g. district assemblies, state governments) where FFBS is being implemented for providing both technical expertise and taking FFBS to other areas outside the project;
- local NGOs for implementing FFBS in the communities;
- research partners (e.g. national agricultural research organizations) for generating and providing research-based evidence for the better implementation and scaling up of FFBS; and
- other organizations (e.g. UNICEF, Terre des Hommes and the Initiative for Food Security and Nutrition in Segou in Mali) for providing technical expertise on nutrition.

### Process of and criteria for selecting facilitators/champions/mentors

Facilitators are selected at two levels: for the FFBS and for the village/community. Each FFBS selects its own leader who is a farmer-to-farmer trainer and who facilitates processes for experimenting, learning and adapting for the FFBS members. At the village/community level, community-based trainers (CBTs) are selected by community members who work with the FFBS and community leaders. A CBT supports more than one FFBS. The criteria for selection of these facilitators include:

- leadership (in some cases quotas were set for women, for example in market research committees where 85% of the leadership consisted of women);
- willingness to host learning sessions on their farms;
- ability and willingness to attend trainings and impart lessons to team members/farmers;
- literacy and/or numeracy in local language; and
- a commitment to displaying gender positive behaviour and becoming a role model and change agent for the community.

### Training of facilitators/champions/mentors

Training is provided for CBTs, the staff of the various ministries as needed, and the CARE staff on the FFBS by a team of technical area thematic experts.

The areas covered (as detailed in the FFBS toolkit) are: community mobilization and facilitation skills; sustainable agriculture; market engagement and business skills; nutrition education; gender equality, women's empowerment and men's engagement through gender dialogues; and participatory monitoring and evaluation using the participatory performance tracker.

The trainings are done intensely at project inception and cover all the themes and topics. Afterward, they are done every season when needed and developed with the community once a year in accordance with the FFBS calendar. Special trainings are also held as needed (e.g. during a pest outbreak), or on topics, such as gender-based violence (GBV) and child marriage.

## SECTION 3

## IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

### Key steps in the implementation cycle

A key feature of the FFBS is that it follows the agricultural seasonal cycle of a particular crop and integrates all the themes to create a FFBS calendar. It may or may not include other crops. This ensures that the trainings are held when needed and that they respect time and labour issues. This also facilitate greater participation of both men and women farmers. The generic steps that apply to any value chain are listed below.

#### — Step 1: Laying the foundations

- Training CARE staff and partners in facilitation skills and programme approaches
- Group formation and site selection: FFBS brings together farmers cultivating a particular crop
- Training of CBTs after their selection by community with the topics covering: principles of adult learning, qualities and tools of a good facilitator, unpacking the exercises, giving and receiving feedback
- Community visioning to outline aspirations and create project awareness and expectations
- Preparation of seasonal plans and budgets, and preparation of FFBS calendars with CBTs and communities
- Creation of partnerships for production and markets activities

#### — Step 2: Establishment and running of FFBS

Sessions are conducted in line with the seasonal calendar, and their order is not necessarily fixed. For example, the production/yield estimation is undertaken around two months before the rainfall season begins to facilitate linkages to markets, land allocation and inputs acquisition.

- Sustainable agriculture: selection and set up of demonstration plots; germination tests; manure preparation; soil, water, pest, disease and weed management; harvest and post-harvest management; evaluation of FFBS plots; farmer field days
- Marketing: introduction to marketing concepts, selecting a market research committee, production estimation and determining profitability, conducting market surveys, selection of best products and outlets, designing a business plan, conducting a gendered value chain analysis and marketing as a group
- Gender dialogues: introducing partners/spouses of women farmers to the programme (this ended up being a key success factor for uptake) specifically to attend gender dialogue sessions that cover land and input access, nutrition decision making, workload sharing, income control and role models for men; the daily clock, harmony in the home, interpersonal relations, household decision making, learning to listen; and envisioning empowerment through drawings
- Nutrition: understanding undernutrition using problem trees, food groups and the 'healthy plate' that provides a balanced diet containing all the food groups in the recommended proportions; growing nutritious foods/planning a home garden; cooking demonstrations; and exclusive breastfeeding
- Monitoring, evaluation and learning: participatory performance tracking for self and group assessment, gender dialogue monitoring tools, end of season reflection, focus group discussions

### — Step 3: Field and special topic days

- Demonstrate improved agricultural practices to the rest of the community
- Deliver specific training modules around a number of key issues, including workload burden and time, access and control and use of resources, and GBV
- Hold gender dialogues on special topics, such as GBV or child marriage
- These sessions are open to FFBS members, their spouses and entire community

### — Step 4: FFBS graduation

- Held at the end of three or four years, based on the collective readiness assessment and the group participatory performance tracker data. At this point, the groups can make both inward and outward linkages related to information, inputs and services.

## Average length of the implementation cycle

- Three to five years with at least a half of the groups graduating in year four.

## Graduation from the methodology

Graduation out of the FFBS is based on a group's readiness assessment tool that evaluates their governance practices, their ability to independently manage their activities and access extension services, inputs, finances and output markets. They continue to function as producer groups or VSLAs.

The project continues to train and monitor groups that have not graduated to address technical challenges and provide support.

## SECTION 4

## MONITORING

### Monitoring system

#### — Internal by participants

- The participatory performance tracker tool is applied by FFBS semi-annually to collect data on individual farmer's adoption of practices in all domains (agriculture, markets, gender and nutrition) and group performance data on governance, access to services and inputs and record keeping. The two sets of data provide a group composite score that is used for group evaluation of group maturity.
- As part of the qualitative review, participants (women, male group members/spouses, community leaders, polygamous and monogamous male-headed households, female-headed households, role model men and non-project men) are involved in developing and monitoring progress markers and outcome challenges for observable gender behaviour changes.

#### — External at the programme level

- Baseline and endline surveys are used to measure access to services, yields, income, and savings along with household dietary diversity surveys, the Coping Strategies Index, and CARE's Women's Empowerment Index.
- Qualitative mid-term review is undertaken to review empowerment objectives and 'ground-truth' and contextualize definitions and meanings of key terms by communities. The outcome mapping method is used to measure, monitor, and encourage processes of gender-related behaviour change among men and women based on their own definitions of empowerment. This process led to the development of a gender indicator framework that is used to measure change qualitatively and is now routinely used in other programmes as good practice.
- Annual review studies, which involve a cohort of households in each country and use key indicators from the baseline covering one woman and man from the household, tell the impact story of key participating households and generate an overall snapshot of programme progress toward target outcomes every 12 months.

## Indicators

### — Quantitative

The following data are collected at household level from farmers participating in FFBS.

- Percentage change in net income generated by women smallholders
- Percentage change in yield per unit area by sex of household head
- Percentage women reporting change in control over or ownership over a core set of productive resources and assets (land, inputs, water and tools)
- Percentage change in women farmers' access to a core set of agricultural services (extension, information, finance)

### — Outcome level

- Food and nutrition security: percentage change in dietary diversity scores
- Economic poverty reduction: percentage change in household income
- Livelihoods Resilience: Coping Strategies Index score
- Women's empowerment: percentage change on the Women's Empowerment Index; the SDE score on the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)

### — Qualitative (community level)

- Household decision-making processes
- Women's own definitions of empowerment
- Men's engagement in the programme and personal changes
- Community leaders' views and practices

## SECTION 5

## BUDGET

### Main items of expenditure

- Staffing costs (e.g. personnel, travel, communication, equipment)
- Field facilitation (e.g. setting up and maintaining agricultural demonstration plots, holding nutrition and gender dialogues, organizing participatory performance tracking sessions, monitoring activities and holding formal training sessions)

### Total budget

Not available

## SECTION 6

## RESULTS

### Number of beneficiaries reached

The FFBS programme directly reached 52 126 poor women smallholder farmers; 50 290 men and boys (spouses, household members); and 2 055 elites, including traditional leaders. The women were members of 3 619 pre-existing groups that CARE had helped to strengthen in previous years through the VSLAs.

### Main changes attributed to the methodology

- **Gender-related changes** achieved under the CARE Pathways programme through the FFBS model
  - Increase in the number of empowered women: The number of empowered women, according to CARE's Women Empowerment Index (a variation of WEAI) more than doubled in Ghana and the United Republic of Tanzania.
  - Increase in women's decision-making power over assets
  - More women leaders and more women felt confident in their ability to speak out
  - Changing attitudes about gender equality in family life: Pathways' interventions changed women's perceptions about gender issues in their homes and communities. Although patriarchal attitudes about family life and the distinct roles of men and women in the household still persist

in communities, participants revealed during focus group discussions that gender relations have improved over the project period, enhancing harmony in household relationships.

- Women in positions of power: In Ghana, with support from the Pathways programme, 18 women successfully ran for seats in local government bodies. Engagement with district assemblies influenced change in the way the assemblies operate: the District Assembly in Ghana now has women members in the finance and works committees, which were initially dominated by men. Additionally, there are now five more female district representatives (up from one in 2013). Women representatives now constitute 13% of the District Assembly.
- Changing government policies: In Ghana, 12 communities have written by-laws that address a range of gender-related issues, such as protection from domestic violence and women and girls' rights to land. In Mali, the government passed a law in 2015 that set a quota for a minimum of 30% women's representation in all government bodies.
- Increased access of women to fertile land
- Reduced acceptance of GBV

#### — Other changes

- High return on investment: The Social Cost Benefit Analysis of the programme conducted externally in 2016 showed that Pathways had a USD 31 return for every USD 1 invested. This was split between women's empowerment, improved food security, and higher incomes, with 25% of the impact coming from spillover into the communities from Pathways farmers.
- Higher farm incomes
- Improved access to finances: Pathways participants in all locations cited VSLAs as the most impactful intervention. Many noted that access to credit was the best outcome from the project.
- Increased quality and quantity of food: This change can lead to increases in dietary diversity and women are able to access more diverse diets within the family.
- Improved resilience: Even in an El Niño year in 2015, with critical droughts, cyclones and flooding in many of the implementing countries, agricultural production increased by as much as 56% for some crops. In places where national yields dropped by 30 to 50% (e.g. Malawi), yields for Pathways farmers typically remained constant or increased.

### Key success factors and strengths of the methodology

- Engaging with the government and traditional leaders helped the project advance its goal of women's empowerment. Government engagement enabled the passing of voting acts to improve women's access to land, and the traditional leaders helped to change social norms.
- Having a master calendar helps set project expectations, supports staff in overcoming their technical biases and increases community ownership of the process and outcomes.
- Standardized tools simplify things so that 'everyone' can use it, including community-based extension agents who have between 8 to 12 years of education, and improve CARE's ability to monitor effectiveness and quality.
- Demonstration plots and discussions on social topics engage the entire community, while dialogue sessions on gender and nutrition contribute to positive changes in relationships at the household level.
- Involving spouses early in the process has been a key success factor of the FFBS approach.
- The commitment of community leaders is crucial to the promotion of sustainable behaviour change.

### Challenges and measures to overcome them

- Motivating and incentivizing CBTs was a major hurdle to sustainability, as they spend much of their time working for their communities on a voluntary basis.
  - Registering them with the government services provided CBTs with recognition as a village/ community-level service provider. They became the entry point for government and NGO-run projects to work with farmers.
  - They were also trained to be service providers (e.g. agri-kiosk owners) and earned an income from sales while providing information.
- Securing ownership titles for plots allocated to women remains a key challenge.



- The project works with community and religious leaders and the community as a whole to change this situation.
- High interest for loans from financial institutions limited women’s access to loans and thereby limited their income from agriculture.
- Social pressure on men influences whether they change their behaviour towards women in some villages.
  - Establishing networks for male/gender champions addressed this issue to certain extent.

### Potential for upscaling

#### — Potential improvements

- Working with government departments to mainstream and incentivise CBTs much earlier in the FFBS cycle rather than at the end of the programme
- Stronger focus on business skills, livestock management and climate change resilience (a version of the manual that takes this into consideration is under preparation)
- Collaborating across sectors for integrated and efficient service delivery on important matters, such as the intersection between water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and nutrition, as well as and sexual rights and reproductive rights
- Mainstream ‘staff transformation’ and capacity using CARE’s Social Analysis and Action (SAA) approach
- Mainstream the gender indicator framework and measurement of gender behaviour change at the individual and community level
- Mainstream social consciousness and linkages to social movements for gender behaviour change

#### — Adaptation

- The model can be, and has been, adapted to local languages and French, and to include a focus on livestock, climate change and additional business skills development
- The digitization of the toolkits and manuals is already underway (e.g. Talking Book and videos to address extension gaps and pass on difficult messages)
- Mainstreaming GBV into the toolkit can prevent, capture and measure GBV

### Potential for replication

#### — Key enablers

- Adaptability of the model to value chains, communities and other local contexts
- Working through existing groups, and presence of a large network of CARE’s flagship of VSLAs as a programming platform
- Presence of a comprehensive process-oriented toolkit that is adaptable
- Ability to digitize the model into low-tech options (e.g. the Talking Book)
- Interest in uptake by government departments as a viable extension model is the key to replication

### Sustainability of the methodology once project/external input is complete

- Farmers indicated during the endline study “that the CBTs reside within our communities, thus making it easy for us to call on them for assistance any time.” The CBTs are employable beyond the project, especially those who have been educated to senior secondary school level. “The extra skills they develop through the FFBS provide them with experience to seek similar employment with other NGOs operating in the area or to find other more formalized employment.”
- Uptake within the government departments is another pillar of sustainability. In Ghana, the 341 trained CBTs have formed a network connected to various district departments of agriculture. Through this network, they established a forum to continuously interact, learn and offer support to each other in the absence of an external facilitator. In Malawi, government staff and the Ministry of Agriculture use the FFBS toolkit, videos and demonstration plots for training, field days and agricultural shows. In Malawi, CBTs who were also agro-dealers were registered with Ministry of Trade and Industry to ensure that they were connected to the national network for agro-dealers and were recognized by the association as seed traders.
- Building the capacity and confidence of women in leadership in formal and informal structures, where they will continue to champion rights of smallholder farmers is critical.

- Investment by private sector partners into the model is critical for reaching scale and influencing their practices around the engagement of women.
- Uptake by development partners (e.g. the USAID-funded Food for Peace Harande programme in Mali) was based fully on the FFBS model and reached approximately 310 885 households.
- Linking to social movements such as the Network of Women's Rights (NETWRIGHT) in Ghana and Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) will be crucial for addressing GBV and women's land rights.

## SECTION 7

## RESOURCES

### Publications

- The FFBS Toolkit  
<https://www.care.org/work/world-hunger/agriculture/models/farmers-field-and-business-school-toolkit>
- CARE (2018) *Social Analysis and Action (SAA) in Food and Nutrition Security Programming*  
[https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/images/in-practice/Gender-in-the-workplace/SAA.GloballImplementationManual\\_FINAL.English.rights-reserved\\_2018.pdf](https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/images/in-practice/Gender-in-the-workplace/SAA.GloballImplementationManual_FINAL.English.rights-reserved_2018.pdf)
- New Economics Foundation (2016) *Social Cost Benefit Analysis of CARE International's Pathways Program*. Prepared by M. Weatherhead, S. Mariam, S. Arnold, S. and A. Freeman,  
[https://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/nef\\_social\\_cost\\_benefit\\_analysis\\_of\\_pathways.pdf](https://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/nef_social_cost_benefit_analysis_of_pathways.pdf)



Member of a FFLS in Kotido district Uganda participating in an exercise on the Gender Balance Tree

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# 10. Farmer Field and Life School

PREPARED BY

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## SECTION 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

**Name of the methodology****Farmer Field and Life School (FFLS) and Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS)****Countries with implementation experience**

Uganda (North and North Eastern regions)

**Start/end date**

January 2015 – September 2017

**Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology**

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Uganda, under the programme, Consolidating Gains in the Multi-sectoral Prevention and Response to Gender-based Violence (GBV) in North and North Eastern Uganda (a joint programme on GBV funded by the Royal Norwegian Embassy).
- FAO has been promoting and implementing FFLS globally since 2007. The methodology has also been adapted to meet the specific needs of young people (aged 12 to 17) in JFFLS.

**Purpose of the methodology and the domains of gender inequality that are addressed**

- Reduction of GBV with specific focus on women and girls of reproductive age
- Transformation of intra-household relations

**Contribution of the methodology to wider development/organizational/project goals**

FFLS provide season-based experiential learning on good agricultural practices and life skills. The overall objectives of the FFLS are:

- the diversification of income generation opportunities for male and female farmers, which reduces vulnerability to GBV;
- wealth creation;
- an increase in household assets.

**Target group**

FFLS are geared toward individual men and women aged 18 and over. JFFLS target boys and girls 12 to 17 years old. Initial selection has focused on locations with a high incidence of reported GBV. Within communities, the selection of members of FFLS has been based on the level of interest in participation after a general mobilization.



## SECTION 2

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

**Key entry points for applying the methodology**

- Groups of 25 to 30 members, each drawn from a different household and whose mobilization was done by the implementing partners
- Young people who are selected by facilitators and teachers to join JFFLS (25 to 30 members)

**Implementing partners**

Implementing partners were local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) based in the project locations whose role was to facilitate the learning by the group members: Christian Action to End Poverty (CATEP) and Pentecostal Churches of Uganda (PCU).

District and sub-country technical officers responsible for community development and production assumed the role of community mobilization, supervision, oversight and training on specific subject matters (e.g. agronomic and financial literacy training, livestock management, and awareness about relevant government programmes).

**Process of and criteria for selecting facilitators/champions/mentors**

Community-based facilitators (CBFs) selected from among active and interested group members facilitate the learning by the group members. CBFs are selected in a participatory manner by group members and local authorities. For each FFLS, there were two CBFs – one male, one female.

CBF characteristics include: capable of transferring technical knowledge and skills (e.g. life skills, community mobilization, group organization and gender mainstreaming); resourceful, creative and innovative; knowledgeable about the group and community members; able to influence their attitudes and behaviours to free the community from harmful practices associated with, and/or consequent to, such as GBV; and able to carry out activities on voluntary basis.

**Training of facilitators/champions/mentors**

Selected implementing partner facilitators benefitted from a three-week comprehensive training for those who had previously not been trained in the FFLS methodology. Implementing partner facilitators who had previously received training in the methodology received a six-day refresher.

The CBFs, in addition to participating in group training activities, were mentored by the implementing partner facilitators to gain skills in group facilitation.



## SECTION 3

## IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

## Key steps in the implementation cycle

- **Step 1: Recruitment of implementing partner facilitators to establish and implement FFLS**
  - Facilitators, who are staff members of the implementing partners, were trained in the FAO FFLS group formation dynamics. The facilitators then formed groups in their assigned locations. They carried out a rapid group/member identification assessment in each of the participating sub-counties. The assessment included information on the enterprises selected to be studied by the FFLS and the types of validation that would be done through field trials.
  - For the JFFLS, teachers from schools in the locality were trained in the methodology so that they could co-facilitate learning together with the implementing partner facilitators.
- **Step 2: Groundwork**
  - Selection of new FFLS groups and/or strengthening of existing groups and identification of CBFs
- **Step 3: Establishment of FFLS and the implementation of action learning activities and supporting the FFLS to set up validation/comparative studies/field trials to test and demonstrate learning**
  - The FFLS uses a host farmer's land, school land or allocated community land. Adult groups receive technical guidance on (i) good agricultural practices with inputs supplied mainly for demonstration and learning to increase productivity, diversification and good nutrition practices (inputs include: short-maturing seeds for learning, such as vegetables, maize, beans, soya; planting materials, such as cassava stems and sweet potato vines; and agricultural equipment, such as watering cans, hand hoes and wheelbarrows); (ii) entrepreneurial and farming skills, as well as business and marketing skills; (iii) training in village savings and loans associations; and (iv) life skills, including interpersonal communication, literacy, numeracy and gender roles and decision making.
  - In JFFLS, in-school and out-of-school children and adolescent/youth groups learn about staying healthy and protecting themselves from risks (e.g. GBV, HIV, alcoholism, early pregnancy and marriage). They also develop their potential and build their self-esteem and confidence through interpersonal communication and home gardening practices.
  - Gender Action Learning System (GALS) tools were integrated in the core training. GALS uses hand-drawn pictures to encourage couples and their children to visualize the future they want for their households, including actions that could be taken against societal ills, such as GBV. The tools promote gender transformation and breaking through gender-based barriers at the individual level and within households and networks. These tools include the Vision Road Journey, the Gender Justice Diamond, the Gender Balance Tree and the Challenge Action Tree.
  - Group investment plans are developed, and agricultural inputs and related equipment for group and network activities are procured and distributed as start-up kits. Ideally, a group receives two rounds of inputs: one to learn from and one to invest for the next season. However, this is highly dependent on the availability of funds for the kind of enterprise selected.
  - Follow up actions by facilitators include mentoring of households for any aspects of the learning covered by the FFLS (both agronomic practices and life skills) if requested by a household or identified by the facilitator. In the initial cycle this is undertaken by facilitators and subsequently by CBFs.
  - In the first cycle, the facilitators run the FFLS, but when new FFLS are established, the facilitator mentors the CBFs who later continue working on their own.
- **Step 4: Exchange visits for learning between groups in different locations**

### — Step 5: Graduation

The gender-integrated FFLS activities are implemented at household, group and network levels and linkages are made with government programmes.

- Farmers who have completed the FFLS cycle and have the knowledge and confidence to operate a FFLS with the correct use of tools, continue the activities within their group or in a new group (if the number of participants increase) with support from CBFs.
- Group members offer each other peer learning support.
- Members of JFFLS are expected to take the learning to their respective households.
- CBFs are mentored by implementing partner facilitators to take on the FFLS facilitation as an exit strategy.

### Average length of the implementation cycle

- Two seasons of learning (about 9 to 12 months)

### Graduation from the methodology

Participants graduate after two seasons. The groups continue to function with the support of the CBF.

## SECTION 4

## MONITORING

### Monitoring system

Internal monitoring is done by participants. The FFLS members monitor the progress of the group (e.g. the results of the field trials, observed changes in GBV).

Joint monitoring was conducted by the joint programme team together with government and donor representatives to:

- assess the extent to which GBV was being addressed in a multisectoral way; and
- understand the extent to which livelihoods support improved economic and social status of women.

A final independent external evaluation was conducted for the joint programme using an earlier baseline assessment, which was based on a household questionnaire.

### Indicators

#### — Quantitative

- Household dietary diversity score among targeted households
- Percentage of FFLS households where members are knowledgeable and using better agronomic practices as a result of their participation in the FFLS
- Percentage of households where members are knowledgeable and have skills related to income generation
- Percentage of men and women in targeted households suffering from GBV reached through awareness programmes (i.e. have learned about causes of GBV and how to reduce its occurrence and tolerance towards it)
- Percentage of households whose members jointly participate in decision making on production and consumption
- Proportion of households whose members are knowledgeable about the roles of men, women, boys and girls
- Percentage of targeted men, women, boys and girls reached through mentoring
- Number of women able to generate income to sustain themselves and their families in order to minimize the dependency of wives for cash on their husbands (one of the causes of violence in the home), and make them instead co-contributors to household cash/income and decision makers in their use
- Gender-integrated FFLS modules and integration of GBV into FFLS (process indicator)

#### — Qualitative

Other changes are noted through the GALS tools but not reflected as indicators (e.g. freeing time for rest and recreation to weave mats, plait hair)

**SECTION 5****BUDGET****Main items of expenditure**

- Training activities
- Demonstration materials at the beginning of the cycle
- In-kind start-up grants (e.g. food store for bulking produce at the network level, seeds and agricultural tools and equipment for J/FFLS demonstrations, and goats for JFFLS groups)
- CBFs do not receive allowances but are given promotional materials (e.g. branded T-shirts, umbrellas, carrier bags) for motivation

**Total budget**

- USD 691 328 (approximately USD 4 700 per group)

**SECTION 6****RESULTS****Number of beneficiaries reached**

A total of 4 138 people (1 798 men and boys, and 2 319 women and girls) in 147 J/FFLS received technical guidance on good agricultural practices, and received inputs to increase productivity, diversify livelihoods and promote good nutrition practices.

**Main changes attributed to the methodology**

- **Gender-related changes**
  - By giving men and women the opportunity to learn together on effective approaches for livelihood sustainability, men see the value of women’s work and more importantly, the value of women.
  - After the first year, men and women started to participate in the FFLS with their partners as couples/households. This has led to positive transformations in gender relationships within households. Examples include:
    - men carrying out tasks that previously had been left to women (e.g. child minding, cooking, fetching water, cleaning compounds), which gives the women some ‘she-time’; and
    - in some households, men and women discussing the use and allocation of their income together, whereas before it was the man who took these decisions alone.
  - Members of the FFLS became community watchdogs, conducting home support/mentoring visits to ensure that their members do not engage in GBV. This demonstrated that J/FFLS are a powerful tool for peace building, reconciliation and reconstruction of social cohesion within communities. This role is self-appointed, community members watch out for each other in the group and outside.
- **Other changes**
  - Livelihoods improved significantly. Women adopted backyard gardens to reduce expenditure on vegetables and this contributed to improving the household diet.
  - Both men and women started investing in alternative income-generating activities to increase self-reliance and food security.
  - Nutritional status is gradually improving as dietary diversity increases.

**Key success factors and strengths of the methodology**

- Gender-integrated J/FFLS provide a safe space for women and men, boys and girls, to talk and learn together about topics (e.g. gender roles and relations, women’s time burden) that are not directly related to the group’s original purpose.
- Addressing GBV as an integral component of a broader livelihood programme is a winning strategy. The core business of the FFLS is to improve production and livelihoods, but the gender-integrated approach adds value by approaching it from the GBV angle.

- Providing household support, instead of individual support to women, avoids conflict within households and strengthens the productive capacities of both women and men.
- Integrating activities that build entrepreneurial skills, generate income and contribute to the accumulation of disposable assets through shared decisions of men and women contributes to reducing GBV.
- Developing interventions that consider the relationship between GBV, food and socio-economic security is central to identifying appropriate actions to reduce men and women's vulnerability to violence and mitigate the impact of violence.
- Local government support and participation are essential for ensuring that the intervention to build and strengthen socio-economic and life skills are effective and sustainable within the communities.

### Challenges and measures to overcome them

- As a result of budget constraints and limited resources, several planned activities could not be implemented (e.g. provision of start-up grants to all FFLS groups and in-kind support to business planning for FFLS), fewer implementing partners were recruited and activities were scaled down.
- Prolonged dry spells destroyed some of the crops planted, right from the nursery stage. Farm production was reduced and, in some cases, failed completely. Farmers learnt new practices but were unable to benefit from increased agricultural production.
- Despite overwhelming interest by community members to form FFLS groups, there was some resistance by the groups established in 2015 to split and establish new groups. This was overcome through sensitization and household-level mentoring, and by supporting new groups through implementing partners as the CBFs were trained.
- With regard to village savings and loans associations, poor loan recovery by group members resulted in low turn up for group meetings/learning sessions and limited savings mobilization. This was countered by the group leaders adhering to the group constitution of exerting sanctions on defaulters. This led to improvement in attendance and time management for meetings.
- Attendance at meetings was disrupted by external events (e.g. national election campaigns).

### Potential for upscaling

- **Requirements to support upscaling**
  - Refine the existing J/FFLS module and disseminate it for use in higher educational institutions, to ensure institutionalization of the approach (e.g. the integration of the J/FFLS methodology into the modalities of agricultural extension)
- **Potential improvements**
  - Strengthen the monitoring of the J/FFLS methodology, especially regarding indicators of gender transformative change at different levels (e.g. household, community, service provider organization)

### Potential for replication

- **Key enablers**
  - J/FFLS are an appropriate vehicle for transferring lifelong agribusiness and livelihood skills and for leveraging opportunities by both adults and children, whether literate or illiterate.
  - J/FFLS are best suited for communities that rely on agriculture production for their livelihoods, as they will have a strong motivation for learning and adopting the acquired agronomic, husbandry and business/financial practices.
  - The support of and participation by the local government authorities up to the village level is essential for interventions aiming to build skills and enhance socio-economic conditions to be successful, effective and sustainable in the community.
  - Investing in mentorships and activities that strengthens skills fosters a positive 'do it yourself' culture that reduces reliance on unsustainable external direct support.
  - Empowering women and children with production and financial management skills makes them less vulnerable to GBV.

### Sustainability of the methodology once project/external input is complete

- The gender-integrated FFLS materials are now used in all the farmer field school activities of the projects.
- Couples who learn together apply their learning in all spheres of their life more widely than spouses who have learned individually. This is because of the mistrust often held by male partners is overcome when couples attend the meetings together. Skills and knowledge learned together are employed in planning, budgeting, financial management, decision making, health services and children's education.
- In the long run, investments in knowledge and skills improvement is more sustainable than providing agricultural input support. These investments promote self-reliance, whereas external direct support can create dependency. Although the demonstration inputs and start-up kits are an important part of the process, budget constraints compromise their ability to be more impactful

## SECTION 7

## RESOURCES

### Publications

- FAO and WFP (2007) *Getting Started! Running a Junior Farmer Field and Life School*  
<http://www.fao.org/tempref/docrep/fao/010/a1111e/a1111e00.pdf>
- FAO Uganda (2010) *Facilitators' Guide for Running a Farmer Field School*  
<http://www.fao.org/3/a-bq668e.pdf>
- FAO (2016) *Farmer field school guidance document*  
<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5296e.pdf>
- WEMAN and Oxfam Novib (2014) *Rocky Road to Diamond Dreams. GALs Phase 1 – Visioning and Catalysing a gender Justice Movement Implementation Manual, V1.0*  
[https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/redactie/Downloads/English/SPEF/140701\\_RRDD\\_manual\\_July\\_small\(1\).pdf](https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/redactie/Downloads/English/SPEF/140701_RRDD_manual_July_small(1).pdf)

### Videos

- Farmers taking the lead: 30 years of Farmer Field Schools (Produced by FAO in 2019)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzZ-1-uofyA>
- Institutionalising Farmer Field Schools in Uganda (Produced by FAO in 2016)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtJCx2RY3oc>





Trias Acodihue San Antonio Huista  
HD-4147 women coop members

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# 11. Gender Mainstreaming in Member-based Organizations

PREPARED BY

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## SECTION 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

**Name of the methodology****Toolbox for Gender Mainstreaming in Member-based Organizations****Countries with implementation experience**

The methodology was created in El Salvador, with testing afterwards in Guatemala and the Philippines. The Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair Trade Small Producers and Workers (CLAC) is interested in extending the methodology to all other countries in the network. At this moment, initial actions have started in several countries including Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru.

**Start/end date**

- 2014–2016: design and implementation of the roadmap by Trias Central America with four partners in El Salvador
- 2017: methodology development, including understanding the mechanisms of change and detecting any trends or coherence in various processes, and integrating them into the methodology
- 2017–2018: roll out in different countries of CLAC (e.g. Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua)

**Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology**

Trias, a Belgian development non-governmental organization (NGO) with experience dating back to the 1960s, works with a worldwide network of partners to support the self-development of disadvantaged farmers and small business owners in 14 countries across Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia. Working with farmer organizations and entrepreneur organizations is part of Trias' DNA, as it is backed up by three rural and three entrepreneurial Belgian membership-based organizations.

Trias cooperates with 140 farmer and/or entrepreneur organizations worldwide, supporting over 3 million family farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs. Trias specializes in organizational strengthening because strong organizations facilitate joint action towards social and economic empowerment, poverty alleviation, wealth creation and the well-being of their members.

**Purpose of the methodology and the domains of gender inequality that are addressed**

The methodology works towards individual empowerment of women and men, in parallel with an intentional change process of organizational structures towards gender equality. The methodology works at different levels: individual, enterprises/value chains and organizations. The household-level application is under development.

The integrated approach, which is self-led by the leaders of an organization, works to reduce the structural barriers for gender equality by working on three main interrelated pillars:

- the institutionalization of gender equity,
- the empowerment of women, and
- the building of alliances between women and men.

**Contribution of the methodology to wider development/organizational/project goals**

The methodology provides a pathway for inclusive organizational development. It enables member-based organizations and other types of organizations, such as NGOs, to work on their sustainability by addressing inclusivity and gender equality as a major strategy in order to respond to the differentiated needs of their membership. Gender equality is part of an organization's sustainable development.

The methodology facilitates:

- the inclusion of youth and other minority groups
- innovation and economic initiatives for women and youth
- improvement of environmental sustainability of participating organizations
- improvement of democratic participatory decision-making
- improvement of social sustainability towards the communities
- the empowerment of women, youth and men at individual, household, organizational and community levels.

### Target group

- Men and women (adults and youth) who are members of producer organizations and interested in inclusive organizational development, and female leaders in producer organizations.

## SECTION 2

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

### Key entry points for applying the methodology

There are three entry points:

- producer organizations
- leaders (men and women) of producer organizations and leaders of CLAC
- female leaders.

The starting point is the interest of an organization to work on their gender equality and organizational inclusiveness.

### Implementing partners

CLAC is a fair trade platform for Latin America. It works as an umbrella organization with a membership of close to 340 000 family farmers (producers) organized into 840 producer organizations in 24 countries in Latin America.

### Process of and criteria for selecting facilitators/champions/mentors

The methodology is based on self-directed processes that can be replicated internally. The process is not always linear. The two main elements are described below.

- Each organization forms a 'pro-equity committee', comprising members of the organization at different levels. It is important to assure a good mix of men and women, adults and young persons, who represent the formal leadership and members from the membership base. Preferably a technical person with competences on gender issues is also included. These committee members are the promoters of the organizational process.
- For the empowerment of women, there is a selection of female leaders. They are formal leaders belonging to the board and/or other women who are leaders in the community but may not necessarily have a formal mandate. These leaders participate in the 'female leadership school'. After completing a training for trainers' module, they replicate their experience within their cooperative with other women. Criteria for these women leaders are: openness, basic literacy, volunteer spirit and commitment towards the strengthening of their organizations, a respected position in the cooperative and community, availability of time, and decision-making over their own time investments.

## Training of facilitators/champions/mentors

### — Roadmap for institutionalization of gender within member-based organizations

Training is done in groups, with selected leaders and technical staff to introduce the toolbox. It is important to have a good mix of men and women, adults and youth, and representatives from different levels of the organization. A mix of organizations makes it more interactive and creates more learning experiences. Frequently the selection of the members of the pro-equity committee is made from this group because after the training they have a clearer understanding of the methodology.

### — Topics

- Introduction: concepts of gender, human rights, organizational development, inclusivity
- Reflections on the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of the organization regarding gender mainstreaming, the actual situation and the vision for the future related to gender equality using experiential techniques
- The 20 steps of the roadmap are analysed and adapted to the interpretations of the participants (see matrix and list below)
- A personalized roadmap with the steps selected by the participants in relation to their needs, existing experiences, progress and ambitions for the future

### — Duration: A three-day workshop

### — Documentation to promote learning: Experiences are recorded to promote reality-based learning with the group of people who started the process.

### — Trainers: Trias staff and experienced trained staff of partners facilitate the workshop. Trias advisors and/or specialized staff of partners provide follow up for further implementation, with frequent discussion groups among the different partners and the management of the organizations.

### — The female leadership school has three parts

- concepts of gender, human and women rights
- economic initiatives of women
- training skills and abilities to be replicated among other women.

### — Duration: Nine months in a modular system, with 9 sessions of 12 hours each, or an intensive 6-day training course for modules 1 and 2, and an additional course for the third training of trainers session

### — Trainers: Trained staff of Trias partners and CLAC

### — Topics

- Module 1 – Breaking the ice, introduction
- Module 2 – Human rights and identity of gender
- Module 3 – Leadership
- Module 4 – Self-esteem
- Module 5 – Political participation
- Module 6 – Self-esteem of the women
- Module 7 – Economy for life
- Module 8 – Sexual division of work
- Module 9 – Ideas of association to give potential to the economic autonomy of women
- Module 10 – Methodology and group facilitation







### Average length of the implementation cycle

It generally takes three years to implement the roadmap for gender mainstreaming and transform behaviour and organizational culture. The timeline varies depending on the starting point of each organization.

### Graduation from the methodology

Work is in progress for the accreditation of trainers and facilitators.

## SECTION 4

## MONITORING

### Monitoring system

Each organization and level develops its own milestones to monitor the progress. Although they all tend to be very similar, it is important they formulate these milestones themselves.

Collective learning is part of monitoring. Documentation and inter-organizational discussion groups encourage participants to share results and failures, and adapt their strategies.

### Indicators

Work is in progress to design of a set of impact indicators at the individual, enterprise/value chain and organizational level.

#### — Organizational

- Number of women in decision-making positions (board, committees, management) in producer organizations
- Gender inclusivity policy in the organization defined and applied
- Number of women involved in economic initiatives
- Number of services targeting specific groups, such as women and young people (e.g. credit for youth or small pensions for elderly people who let their grandchildren become members)
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation systems with data disaggregated by sex and age
- Strategies developed based on needs and satisfaction measurement of women
- Norms, attitudes and values are gender-sensitive
- Allocation of resources to learning and systematization
- Positive actions towards women are an explicit part of the intervention strategy of the organization

#### — Individual empowerment

Measurement of empowerment is based on Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI):

- Production (capacity and power to influence)
- Resources (power to decide over resources of the producer organization and in the household, access to credit lines)
- Income (control over income, increase in income, number of women with an income)
- Leadership (representative roles)
- Time (reduction of workload and/or responsibilities, increase in personal time)

## SECTION 5

## BUDGET

### Main items of expenditure

- Training activities (including staff for training), exchanges, learning sessions

### Total budget

Not available

## SECTION 6

## RESULTS

**Number of beneficiaries reached**

CLAC represents 332 553 family farmers, of whom 24% are women and 5% are young persons. Between 2014 and 2018, CLAC members participating in the methodology totalled 3 750 (54% women and 46% men) across 14 countries.

The methodology was initially developed in El Salvador, where the Asociación Coordinadora Salvadoreña de Pequeños Productores Organizados (CESPPO) represents five producer organizations with 1 436 members, of whom 17% are women and less than 1% are under 29 years old.

**Main changes attributed to the methodology**

- **Organizational changes within CLAC, CESPPO and producer organizations**
  - Visible adaptation of gender approach by staff
  - Increased participation by women in different levels of the organization (decision makers and technical staff)
  - More representation of women at the board level (although not always with real participation)
  - More women (young and adult) included in training activities, especially about leadership and economic empowerment
  - More women involved in income-generating activities
  - Increased decision-making power of women (although not so clear for youth)
  - Gender and inclusion of youth policies in ‘living’ documents
  - Development of functional tools and instruments to promote gender equality within CLAC
  - Competent specialized staff to promote gender within the CLAC network
  - A significant proportion of the budget allocated for gender mainstreaming in CLAC
  - The collective learning spaces are valuable spaces to guide, follow up and co-create
  - Installation of gender committees in CLAC, CESPPO and cooperatives
  - Incorporation of gender indicators in CLAC’s strategic plan
  - Cyclical sensitization processes increased the number of allies for gender mainstreaming
  - Gender mainstreaming became an essential part of Fairtrade policy and is considered as important as any other standard of the certification.
- **Outcomes in CLAC**
  - Use of non-sexist language
  - Gender focus incorporated in programme and strategy development
  - Youth and women in boards of CLAC, CESPPO and cooperatives
  - Youth and gender committees set up and functioning as part of organizational structure
  - Female leaders encouraging others
  - Credit line for women and youth
  - Women in key positions in the boards and community groups, political roles
  - Increase in female members in some cooperatives in El Salvador
  - Male leaders exercise leadership differently
  - Creation of a minimum pension for the elderly (cooperative Los Pinos)
- **Empowerment of women**
  - Decision-making power**
    - Recognition of the role and contribution of female farmers (it is not only ‘helping’)
    - Women are recognized as problem solvers in the cooperatives and are receptive to new initiatives
  - Access to resources**
    - Increased access to productive resources (e.g. loans, specialized training, market development)
  - Control over income**
    - Increased negotiation capacity
    - Income generation through individual or collective economic initiatives
    - Reinvestment in the well-being of the family (education and nutrition)

**Leadership**

- Increased self-esteem
- Recognition of the role of the women within the organization by its leaders
- Increased capacity of women to speak and participate in public
- Increased participation of women in decision-making bodies
- Transformative leadership observed in women through their articulation of pro-equity work and the ability to work in teams (also in mixed groups)

**Use of time**

- More visibility of the daily jobs done by each household member and significant recognition of these contributions

**Key success factors and strengths of the methodology**

- The approach promotes in-depth change that is institutionally embedded.
- Different levels of the organization are involved in designing the step-by-step approach.
- The combination of individual empowerment, the building of new alliances between men and women and the institutionalization of inclusive and gender-sensitive organizational development creates conditions for simultaneous changes at the individual and collective level, and allows for mutually supportive actions between the levels.
- It is a self-directed process, so each organization develops its own specific process.
- Training and facilitation techniques combine theory and experimental methods to assure that the head (content, strategy), the heart (personal involvement) and the hands (tools and approaches) are in balance.
- Co-creation and learning by doing with the involvement of the leaders and staff is a key element in the design, implementation and analysis of the results.

**Challenges and measures to overcome them**

The commitment of men to the process is a key issue. However, depending on the cultural context, this can be difficult. This difficulty can be mitigated by creating mixed committees and implementing the three pillars simultaneously. In this way, people can be encouraged by small successes. Masculinity is a very important issue to address thoroughly. Since the socialization process with men is different to that of women, a lesson learned is to focus not so much on individual empowerment but more on the interactions with others and approaches to institutionalize those experiences internally.

Empowerment of women and men should be managed carefully to avoid women been seen to fail in their efforts towards more equality. The institutionalization and organizational development process provides a valuable backup to the individual leaders. It creates a 'space' to apply new competences and behaviours to develop a gender-sensitive environment. Without this sensitization and support, there is the danger that when a female leader empowers herself and joins a board, she will be made to feel ridiculous or will give up because of negative attitudes or be unable to attend the meetings at certain times. She needs support to be able to take up that new role, and other board members need to consider ways to create a supportive environment. These women should not bear the full weight of the change process alone.

The legal and the legitimate go hand in hand. It is insufficient to focus only on the development of legal instruments to mainstream gender equality (e.g. women becoming leaders through elections), since the legitimate leadership (e.g. women who are natural leaders) has much more influence. Working both on the empowerment of people and the institutionalization of efforts, creates conditions that can shape organizational culture. Through the step-by-step approach, each process is adapted to the conditions and openness of a specific organization.

## Potential for upscaling

### — Requirements to support upscaling

- Training of female trainers and leaders to implement the process
- Training of group of champions to facilitate the organizational development process

### — Potential improvements

To complete the approach, the advisory team of Trias and CLAC is working on applying the methodology at the household level. Based on workshops on gender methodologies used in the coffee chain, the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology has been identified as offering added value to complete the toolbox approach at the household level.

The accreditation process for trainers and facilitators is a work in progress, but it is important for guaranteeing quality.

The development of a functional set of indicators at the output, outcome and impact level to measure individual and organizational changes is under construction.

### — Adaptation

Each cultural context requires an adaptation process that takes the new setting into account and involves the producer organizations to reflect on the specific context in their country.

## Potential for replication

The methodology is designed to be replicated by rural women and men in their own cooperatives and communities.

The further development of manuals for facilitators, training of trainers' modules will provide more support for the potential replication of the methodology in 24 countries in Latin America.

## Sustainability of the methodology once project/external input is complete

- Sustainability depends on the full-fledged implementation of the roadmap.
- Empowerment processes at the individual level are replicated by the trained leaders.
- The institutional processes will reach full potential in the way the organization manages to influence all spheres of its operation. The investment in creating structural components (e.g. equity committees, policies, internal diagnoses, a monitoring system for progress and change, internal communication and external positioning) supports a sustainable organizational development approach that is steered by the leaders and specialized (potentially external) staff.

## SECTION 7

## RESOURCES

### Publications

- The toolbox for gender mainstreaming in member-based organizations, with detailed description of the roadmap, the 20 steps, the 25 tools and an instruction video are available in Spanish, Portuguese, English and French at <https://www.trias.ngo/en/gender-inclusion-trajectory>
- Documentation of leadership school of women in El Salvador: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLsjZpmA7Fc>
- Manual of leadership school for women available at <http://clac-comerciojusto.org/en/lineas-de-trabajo/ejes-trasversales/gender/and> <http://clac-comerciojusto.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Manual-metodologico-de-escuela-de-liderazgo-femenino-2017-Versi%C3%B3n-final..pdf>
- Gender mainstreaming in coffee chain, systematization of learning workshop about gender methodologies applied by members and allies of SAFE platform (Trias 2018) available at <https://www.trias.ngo/en/worldwide/central-america> and [https://www.trias.ngo/en/sites/default/files/sistematizacion\\_safe\\_2018\\_clac-trias\\_cam\\_003.pdf](https://www.trias.ngo/en/sites/default/files/sistematizacion_safe_2018_clac-trias_cam_003.pdf)





Ever married girls at discussion in megendi kebele of south Gondar  
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# 12. Social Analysis and Action, Ethiopia

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## SECTION 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

**Name of the methodology****Social Analysis and Action (SAA)****Countries with implementation experience**

More than 20 countries, including:

- **East and Southern Africa:** Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Malawi, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania
- **West Africa:** Ghana, Mali
- **North Africa:** Egypt
- **Asia:** Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Viet Nam

In Ethiopia, SAA is implemented in various projects, including Towards Improved Economic and Sexual/Reproductive Health Outcomes for Adolescent girls (TESFA), which is carried out in the Amhara region with funding from the Nike Foundation and Johnson & Johnson.

**Start/end date**

- 2015–2017: full implementation
- 2018: testing new activity interventions and documentation

**Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology**

CARE is the lead implementer of SAA with the full participation of government partners at different levels to ensure ownership and sustainability.

A paramount contribution is also made by community members in implementing SAA and promoting changes in social and gender norms.

**Purpose of the methodology and the domains of gender inequality that are addressed**

SAA is one of CARE's approaches through which individuals and communities explore and challenge the social norms, beliefs and practices that shape their lives and are obstacles that lie at the root of development problems. It is a totally community-led social change process that uses participatory tools to achieve the long-term goal of empowering vulnerable communities through the advancement of equitable gender, social and power norms.

In the SAA approach, critical community dialogue and reflection with the people who influence the norms (e.g. community leaders, religious leaders, mothers-in-law, husbands) is carried out to shape existing expectations, decisions and behaviours around sexual and reproductive health, harmful traditional practices (e.g. early marriage, female genital mutilation), girls' and women's mobility, communication, resource ownership, decision-making power, child care, household chores and gender-based violence (GBV).

**Contribution of the methodology to wider development/organizational/project goals**

CARE has applied SAA to its projects in more than 20 countries. SAA addresses diverse development and social justice issues, and supports CARE's global commitment to gender equality and women's voice.

The goal of the TESFA project is to bring measurable positive change to the economic status and sexual and reproductive health of ever-married girls. In this context, SAA contributes significantly to an increase in the use of family planning services; a decrease in early child marriages; a more equal division of labour; improvements in communication and decision-making skills; improvements in women's ability to save and own assets; and improved relationships among husbands, wives, daughters-in-law, friends, and mothers-in-law.

**Target group**

TESFA targeted ever-married adolescent girls and community leaders who influence and perpetuate social and gender norms in the community.

## SECTION 2

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

**Key entry points for applying the methodology**

Training of trainers from the local government on the methodology is the first step in applying the methodology. The trained government partners then played a key role in cascading the training, and organizing SAA groups at the community level.

**Implementing partners**

The implementing partners are the local government sector offices (e.g. the offices of women and children affairs, health, education, the legal sector, administration, agricultural development) in collaboration with the project team.

**Process of and criteria for selecting facilitators/champions/mentors**

SAA group facilitators are selected by group members based on criteria proposed by government partners and project staff. Each group has two facilitators. If the group is heterogeneous, one female and one male facilitator are selected; if it is homogenous, a member of the same sex is selected as a facilitator.

Key criteria for selecting the group facilitators are:

- known, respected, trusted and accepted by the community;
- able to articulate ideas and facilitate discussion in local language;
- open-minded and analytical;
- agreeable to volunteering to work in her/his community without incentives;
- committed to development activities in the community;
- proficient in writing and reading (at least one of the facilitators);
- able to communicate well;
- skilled in creating a safe space for group members and facilitating change; and
- willing to genuinely reflect on her/his attitude and practices.

**Training of facilitators/champions/mentors**

SAA training of trainers for local government partners and project staff is provided for five days. The training aims to create an understanding of how norms affect the life of the community, especially women and girls; what critical reflection means; how to challenge and facilitate changes; and what women's empowerment means and its contribution. The training is given in a participatory way, and participants are equipped with different SAA tools designed to challenge the existing social and gender norms. The SAA global manual and SAA minimum standards are employed for facilitating the training.

Government partners who follow the training of trainer sessions take the lead in cascading the training for the SAA core groups and SAA group facilitators for two days. The SAA group discussion manual developed by the project is used for facilitating the training.

## SECTION 3

## IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

**Key steps in the implementation cycle****— Step 1: Barrier analysis to identify existing social and gender norms**

The assessment is conducted by CARE project staff to identify the existing social and gender norms in the community that affect the life of women and girls. It can be conducted together with the baseline assessment if needed.

**— Step 2: Validation of norms with the community and government representatives**

The gender and social norms identified through the barrier analysis/baseline process are validated by the community and government representatives. The norms are prioritized based on their impact on women's and girls' lives. This is a key step in securing the consent of the community and the government representatives to work jointly for change.

— **Step 3: Development of SAA discussion manual and translation to the local language**

The discussion manual is prepared by the project experts. It is developed in a simple way and presented in a logical progression that addresses community needs. For each topic, suitable SAA tools are used to facilitate effective discussion and lead to change.

— **Step 4: SAA training of trainers for government partners and project staff**

A five-day training session is organized for the government and project staff to equip them with the basics, tools and facilitation skills of SAA.

— **Step 5: Transform staff capacity**

Transforming staff capacities is a key component of SAA. It enables the staff to facilitate change at the community level. Staff meet regularly to critically reflect and challenge social norms guided by the discussion manual.

— **Step 6: Establishment of the SAA core group**

The core group represents the power holders in the community. They help to increase buy in and the scaling up of adaptation of new social norms. The core group is composed of the grassroots government and service providers, including community leaders, religious leaders, health extension workers, development assistants, school principals and members of legal structures. The core group is established by government partners in collaboration with project staff.

— **Step 7: Orientation training for SAA core group members**

A two-day training session is given for the core group on SAA and facilitation skills using the discussion manual.

— **Step 8: Large community meeting at the grassroots level**

The trained core group members organize a large community meeting at the grassroots level in collaboration with the government and project staff. In the meeting the general brief on SAA is described and SAA discussion groups are formed. The SAA discussion group members (25 to 30 members) include the religious leaders, influential community leaders, mother-in-laws (for ever-married adolescent girls) and influential women. The SAA groups first organize themselves, and after the SAA discussions are finalized, a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) approach is introduced. The introduction of the VSLA approach helps them to continue to meet for VSLA activities and even continue SAA discussions.

Ever-married girls (10–19 years old) have their own group to discuss sexual and reproductive health and life skills. They also have their own VSLA to engage in economic activities and provide resources to participate in income generating activities.

— **Step 9: SAA group formation and selection of facilitators**

Each SAA discussion group selected two facilitators based on the criterion listed in the section above.

— **Step 10: SAA cascading training for the core group and SAA group facilitators**

Group facilitators (SAA groups and core group) train on SAA for three days using the SAA discussion manual. Mindset change is key. The first session is on value clarification. Different norms are identified, and the trainees reflect on their values and challenge each other.

— **Step 11: SAA core group and SAA group discussion start (reflect with the community)**

The SAA facilitators kick off the discussion at the group level to: (i) critically reflect and create an understanding of how norms related to gender and sexuality influence health, women's economic empowerment, food security, nutrition and GBV; (ii) challenge existing norms and start a new way of thinking, feeling and behaving, and through discussions envisage new norms as alternatives; (iii) envision alternatives and identify concrete steps to take; and (iv) learn how gender, social and power norms shape perceptions and expectations of others and ourselves, and influence decisions and behaviours.

— **Step 12: Introduce other activities to SAA groups, depending on the nature of the project**

Some projects introduce VSLA into the ongoing SAA. There is another CARE approach, the village economic and social associations (VESA) approach, which introduces VSLA as an integral part of the SAA early in the process and helps make the SAA discussion sustainable after completing the sessions. (See the Village Economic and Social Associations (VESA) Manual in the resource materials section).

### — Step 13: Exploring replication and/or feedback

Staff and partners ensure lessons learned are fed back to CARE to improve future programming.

### Average length of the implementation cycle

The length of the implementation cycle depends on the group performance and their actions at the community level. SAA involves not only a monthly or bi-monthly discussion, it requires individual and collective planning and implementation. It usually takes one to one and a half years to complete the topics.

### Graduation from the methodology

Change is a process, and the SAA groups are a change agent at the community level. The SAA groups may finalize the discussion topics and take action to realize positive change at individual and community levels on the existing social and gender norms. After the project period, the groups continue discussions on the given topics or include their own additional topics.

## SECTION 4

## MONITORING

### Monitoring system

#### — Internal by participants

The SAA facilitator has a simple discussion monitoring form that is completed during every discussion session. The form tracks date of meeting, discussion topics and materials used in the discussion (e.g. picture codes, manuals, posters), the number of attendees and absentees, the number of dropouts and their reasons for leaving. The facilitator also documents an action plan that the discussants have agreed upon and follows the implementation status using the simple planning form. The facilitators also report on practical changes in the norms and challenges they faced in the implementation of the action plan.

A similar process is followed for staff reflection, as part of the capacity building activity. The facilitator of the staff reflection session reports on the topics that are discussed and the overall process of their critical reflection to learn more.

#### — External

The government partners and project staff provide monthly supportive supervision to the group and on-the-spot support. There are also quarterly review meetings with group facilitators to follow the progress of the discussions and review the implementation of activities. The review meeting also serves to share experiences among the facilitators and refresh on selected tools.

### Indicators

#### — Quantitative

- Percentage of changes in early marriages, female genital mutilation and other harmful traditional practices during the reporting period
- Percentage of arranged early marriages cancelled by SAA
- Proportion of girls who have used any kinds of contraceptives to delay or avoid pregnancy
- Number of ever-married girls who participate in out-of-school girls support groups
- Number of facilitators of school clubs/groups trained on menstrual hygiene
- Increase in use of family planning services
- Changes in the level of ever-married adolescent girls' confidence and self-efficacy
- Percentage of girls who have confidence to speak up in disagreement with their husbands or mother-in-law
- Percentage of ever-married girls who report having autonomy or decision-making power over their own income
- Percentage of ever-married girls engaged in income generating activities
- Percentage of ever-married women engaged in reliable and diversified economic opportunities
- Number of community-based institutions supportive of women exercising their rights

### — Qualitative

- Changes in the mobility of ever-married girls
- Changes in the level of confidence and self-efficacy of ever-married adolescent girls
- Changes in traditional attitudes brought about through changes in social/cultural norms that increase opportunities for ever-married adolescent girls
- Changes in husbands' behaviour regarding sharing household chores
- Changes in girls' participation in household decision making

## SECTION 5

## BUDGET

### Main items of expenditure

- Human resources
- Barrier analysis
- Manual development
- Translation and printing
- Training-related costs
- Monitoring and evaluation (e.g. formal assessment, evaluation, supportive supervision, review meetings)
- Documentation (e.g. case studies, photos, recordings, videos)
- Operational costs, and staff travel and lodging

### Total budget

The budget varies over time and depends on the organization and donor. In the TESFA project covering 42 groups, the average cost per group was USD 1 850 for two years including the follow-up activities.

## SECTION 6

## RESULTS

### Number of beneficiaries reached

The TESFA project reached a total of 2 124 ever-married adolescent girls (10 to 19 years old) and 1 229 reference group members and SAA group members (41% women).

### Main changes attributed to the methodology

SAA helps women and girls to have a voice in their life, household and community. Formal and informal structures become responsive to supporting women and girls to exercise their rights and protect them from GBV and harmful traditional practices. SAA also provides a platform and safe space for staff to reflect, challenge and change values and norms.

#### — Gender-related changes

- Couples' household communication and girls' decision-making skills improved.
- Improved mobility for girls, with indications that the norm that restricted girls from being able to go out of the house was changing. Girls were able to go freely in any social gathering (e.g. church, markets).
- The number of girls who reported feeling confident enough to speak up in disagreements with spouses or mothers-in-law increased.
- Husbands' involvement in household division of tasks (e.g. men engaging in childcare, cooking, baking *injera*, fetching water, cleaning their own feet)
- Girls were able to meet and have friends to share their ideas, which was not allowed previously.
- Women and girls started to take a leadership role in the community.
- Girls started to say no to early marriage and report any information about any arranged early marriages in their village to the SAA group.
- The SAA members engaged in cancelling more than 70 arranged early marriages in their community. In some instances, they reported it to the *woreda* police if they were challenged.



- The girls' group platform served as a catalyst for change beyond matters relating to sexual and reproductive health and economic empowerment. With their newfound negotiation skills and mobility, many of the girls chose to go to school, including those who had dropped out earlier.
- Girls' independence in earning her own income improved, which in turn contributed for the improvements of couples' communication and decision making.
- Women and girls saving for productive investment and income-generating activities increased.
- Women and girls' health-seeking behaviours and service utilization, including family planning, antenatal care and delivery services, improved.
- Proportion of girls using modern contraception increased.
- Women's confidence to use the toilet in the daytime, which was not allowed previously, increased.
- The girls' groups took ownership. They adapted the curricula on sexual and reproductive health and financial skills to make them story-based and more participatory, and included the development of role play.
- Community engagement went beyond support for the girls by creating mutual accountability between the girls, husbands and community members. The community took on the prevention of child marriage in their community, which was not an intended objective of the project.

### Key success factors and strengths of the methodology

- The interest and the full commitment of government structures at different levels to engage in the implementation process was critical.
- The methodology gave full authority to community members to critically reflect, discuss, develop an action plan and execute their plan. The process is totally community led and the project did not interfere with implementation.
- The commitment of group facilitators, community leaders and religious leaders was significant for successful implementation.
- Exemplary changes in the lives of women and girls were also a driving factor for the successful implementation of the methodology.
- The introduction of saving and credit activities into the SAA groups contributed to the groups' regular meetings and commitments after the project closed.

### Challenges and measures to overcome them

- The effort of SAA groups to cancel arranged early marriage was not an easy action in some cases. It required a coordinated action between the SAA group, the core group and the local administration.
- Conducting SAA requires good facilitation skills and its impact depends on the strength of the facilitation of the discussions. Hence the changes and impacts can vary between different facilitators.
- Some parents resist interference in their decision about the early marriage of their daughters, and some try to change the mode of the ceremony to use it as an opportunity for early marriage. The girls and SAA groups use their network to get information about the ceremony and take action if it is for an early marriage.

### Potential for upscaling

From the practical lessons learned from the TESFA model, CARE is designing a more impactful and scalable version. TESFA+ will first build on the ex-post evaluation findings to investigate how to successfully reach more ever-married girls. This will include exploring and documenting the experiences of facilitators, the barriers to auto-replication in neighbouring villages, and complementary pathways to scale. With this additional understanding, CARE will work with communities to design a model that builds on the essential components of the methodology to explore girls' own improvements and capitalize on innovative avenues for impact.

### Potential for replication

SAA groups have played a significant role in making changes in social and gender norms that have positively affected the life of girls and woman. Having observed these changes, neighbouring villages requested support to replicate these groups. One hundred and ninety-three girls' groups were formed and the project was forced to stretch its support to these groups.

### Sustainability of the methodology once project/external input is complete

Throughout the implementation process, the government partners at all levels were fully engaged and this contributed significantly to the ownership and sustainability of project results. In addition, the introduction of the VSLA approach into the SAA groups encouraged the groups to continue their discussions after the project phased out.

## SECTION 7

## RESOURCES

### Publications

- CARE (2018) *Social Analysis and Action Global Implementation Manual*  
[https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/images/in-practice/Gender-in-the-workplace/SAA\\_GloblImplementationManual\\_FINAL.English.rights-reserved\\_2018.pdf](https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/images/in-practice/Gender-in-the-workplace/SAA_GloblImplementationManual_FINAL.English.rights-reserved_2018.pdf)
- CARE (2017) *Social Analysis and Action (SAA) in Food and Nutrition Security Programming*  
A manual for addressing gender and social norm barriers to promote gender transformative changes in Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) Programming  
[https://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/saa\\_in\\_fns\\_december\\_2018\\_1.pdf](https://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/saa_in_fns_december_2018_1.pdf)
- CARE Ethiopia (2018) *Village Economic and Social Associations (VESA) Manual*  
<https://careclimatechange.org/livelihoods-for-resilience-activity-village-economic-and-social-associations-vesa-manual/>
- TESFA model brief  
[http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/tesfa\\_2\\_pager\\_screen.pdf](http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/tesfa_2_pager_screen.pdf)
- TESFA ex-post evaluation (brief and full report) 2017  
[http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/tesfa\\_ex-post\\_final\\_report\\_sept-2017.pdf](http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/tesfa_ex-post_final_report_sept-2017.pdf)
- TESFA evaluation: summary of the evidence by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)  
<http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/TESFA%20Final%20Evaluation.pdf>
- TESFA+ Investigative research brief  
[https://www.care.org/sites/default/files/letter\\_tesfainvestigativeresearchbrief\\_screen.pdf](https://www.care.org/sites/default/files/letter_tesfainvestigativeresearchbrief_screen.pdf)
- Other reports available from CARE Ethiopia office: Social Analysis & Action Implementation Minimum Standards; SAA groups discussion manuals; Girls group discussion manuals on sexual and reproductive healthcare; VSLA discussion manual

### Case stories, photo voices and videos

- TESFA case stories, photo voices and videos  
<https://www.care.org/work/health/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights/what-we-do/adolescent-health/tesfa>  
<https://news.care.org/article/meet-the-runaway-bride-helping-to-stop-child-marriage/>



AgDevCo Farmer keeping records at cattle dipping stations, Zambia  
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# 13. Models to Empower Women in Outgrower Schemes

PREPARED BY

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## SECTION 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

**Name of the methodology****Empowering women in smallholder outgrower schemes through ten principles of success****Countries with implementation experience**

- **West Africa:** Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone
- **East Africa:** Rwanda, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania
- **Southern Africa:** Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia

**Start/end date**

Ongoing

**Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology**

AgDevCo is a specialist investor in African agribusinesses. It provides growth capital and support to deliver positive impact at scale. AgDevCo's Smallholder Development Unit (SDU) is a five-year programme that started in 2016. The SDU is able to provide support to share the costs of enhancing systems and processes that are intended to better link agribusinesses with smallholder farmers. At the same time, the SDU generates sustainable long-term market opportunities for smallholder farmers. Based on case studies from AgDevCo investees and SDU partners, the SDU developed the ten principles of success (listed below) for empowering women in smallholder outgrower schemes.

**Purpose of the methodology and the domains of gender inequality that are addressed**

- To improve gender equality and women's economic empowerment (access and agency) in outgrower schemes

**Contribution of the methodology to wider development/organizational/project goals**

As a private sector investor, AgDevCo's purpose is to build sustainable agribusinesses. Although gender issues are not the primary focus of its investments, AgDevCo believes that gender equality and women's empowerment are significant factors in the success of its investments. Consequently, AgDevCo's intention is to undertake investments that do no harm and safeguard both women and men, as well as create beneficial outcomes for both women and men.

**Target group**

AgDevCo targets women as farmers and suppliers, employees, intermediaries and entrepreneurs linked to agribusinesses and as buyers of fertilizer or agricultural inputs from agribusinesses. The SDU has a target of reaching 50% female beneficiaries and 30% youth (people under 35 years old).

## SECTION 2

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

**Key entry points for applying the methodology**

- Agribusinesses that are currently working with small-scale farmers as outgrowers or planning to work with them

**Implementing partners**

Agribusinesses implement their own strategies, sometimes in collaboration with third parties, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The agribusinesses act as the interface between AgDevCo and the ultimate target group.

AgDevCo developed a gender flyer for agribusinesses (see resource materials) that it shares with potential investees. Project leads notify the business of AgDevCo's gender policy and each investee must sign up to AgDevCo's responsible business principles, which include safeguarding provisions. The minimum requirement is that agribusinesses do no harm to women and that there are no red flag environmental, social and governance risks.

### Process of and criteria for selecting facilitators/champions/mentors

The gender workstream sits within the wider environmental, social and governance framework of AgDevCo and is coordinated by the impact/monitoring and evaluation team. Investment and project leads interact with agribusinesses, including on the topic of gender.

### Training of facilitators/champions/mentors

AgDevCo staff receive an annual training/refresher on how to conduct gender-sensitive due diligence. They have also been provided with specific teach-in sessions that share lessons learnt about addressing gender inequalities in each of the portfolio countries. The SDU also actively engages in knowledge sharing through publications, workshops, conferences, blogs and webinars.

## SECTION 3

## IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

### Key steps in the implementation cycle

AgDevCo's ten principles of success to empower women in smallholder outgrower schemes are listed below.

- **To improve productivity and market engagement**
  - Principle 1: Scale up and commercialize women's crops. Targeting typical 'female' crops and value chains automatically reaches many women. However, there is a risk of male appropriation once crops become profitable.
  - Principle 2: Engage women as equal actors in male-dominated value chains and promote farming as a family business.
  - Principle 3: Ensure women benefit from training. Pay attention to time, place and duration of training, invite the whole household to attend training, encourage women to attend through female role models (e.g. extension officers, lead farmers, training videos featuring women).
  - Principle 4: Ensure women have access to productive resources and promote access to inputs and labour-saving technologies, including mechanization.
  - Principle 5: Improve market access for women. Source from women's groups or female buying agents, aggregate produce locally and provide market information (e.g. via SMS).
  - Principle 6: Ensure that contract farming schemes offer equal opportunities for women and men. Register all household members, rather than just the household head, and adapt criteria to enable farmers with smaller plots to participate.
- **To improve agency and structures**
  - Principle 7: Ensure women benefit from income earned. Ensure women are aware of the income the household is receiving (e.g. spouses collect payment together).
  - Principle 8: Promote equitable sharing and joint budgeting in the household. This can result in joint planning, sharing of workloads, and information sharing about production, practices and marketing. Joint decision making about income and other benefits will motivate women farmers to increase their productivity.
  - Principle 9: Promote women's leadership in farmer organizations. Set targets for women's representation on committees. This may require training women to enable their effective participation and earn their respect from men; encouraging women's applications in job adverts; and mentoring women by internal staff (e.g. supervisors, human resource department or external experts if the company can afford it).
- **To disseminate information**
  - Principle 10: Share success stories of gender-sensitive business practices of AgDevCo and/or agribusinesses and make the business case.



For more information and case studies on each of these principles, please refer to the publication, *Gender lens investing: the case for empowering women* (see resource materials).

There is no graduation among the principles. For example, principle 10 is not necessarily more effective than principle 1. Principles 1 and 2 are value chain-based (i.e. very crop-specific). Agribusinesses typically apply one to three principles and do so often without having a formalized gender strategy or policy. However, some agribusinesses are more gender-aware than others. The extent to which an agribusiness can actively pursue the principles of success will depend on their internal resources and know-how. To help agribusinesses develop a gender strategy, the SDU has prepared a practical guidance document to develop inclusive outgrower schemes. This document includes information on 'quick wins' that agribusinesses could implement to ensure their outgrower schemes benefit both women and men more equally.

Given the diversity in contexts and complexities of developing feasible and commercially attractive interventions, each company and business model may require different gender actions. For this reason, the ten principles of success in empowering women in outgrower schemes are to be used as general guidelines. Agribusinesses are encouraged to identify the gender-based constraints that affect their business, pilot interventions, and collect more information and consult with experts. As a minimum, they must ensure their activities do no harm to women and men, and include a zero tolerance policy for sexual harassment.

### Average length of the implementation cycle

The implementation cycle depends on which principle is being applied and when the partnership with the SDU starts.

### Graduation from the methodology

Agribusinesses operate in different contexts and have various degrees of gender inclusion and hence different outcomes. In some of the outgrower schemes, gender inclusion has led to successes in terms of women's economic empowerment and/or for the business itself. Other companies have yet to start implementing specific gender actions. It is not possible to come up with a 'set menu' of gender interventions.

## SECTION 4

## MONITORING

### Monitoring system

#### — Internal by participants

Agribusinesses typically measure the number of female smallholder farmers they engage with, including number of women attending trainings and the number of female employees they have.

#### — External

When resources are available, external monitoring and evaluations are commissioned to assess deeper impacts. AgDevCo also works with an adapted version of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) as part of selected externally commissioned impact studies (i.e. where gender is part of the impact thesis of a project).

### Indicators

#### — Quantitative

The SDU captures sex-disaggregated data for the following metrics:

- Number of smallholder farmers reached by type of agricultural extension support and training, including information and communication technology for development (ICT4D) (e.g. using smallholder farmer management software) and occasionally innovative technologies (e.g. labour-saving tools or mechanization)
- Number of small and medium enterprise extension and management staff trained

- Number and percentage of smallholders who have established viable commercial relationships with buyers and agribusinesses
- Number and percentage of smallholder farmers obtaining agricultural inputs on credit from buyers and agribusinesses

#### — Qualitative

As part of the annual monitoring impact reports, which are sent to investees, and quarterly impact reporting for SDU partners, qualitative lessons are learnt about how women engage with the company as employees, suppliers or customers, and insights are gained on how the company could enhance its impact on women's empowerment.

## SECTION 5

## BUDGET

### Main items of expenditure

AgDevCo has a specific gender budget to implement its internal gender policy and action plan. Agribusinesses typically do not have the internal resources required to actively implement gender interventions, although some may still decide to proceed with their own funds if there is a clear business case for doing so. Otherwise, agribusinesses typically require grants and/or NGO support.

### Total budget

Not available

## SECTION 6

## RESULTS

### Number of beneficiaries reached

The key metric for the SDU is the number and percentage of smallholder farmers who have established viable commercial relationships with buyers. To date, this figure is 183 861 total beneficiaries of which 49% are women and 30% are youth.

### Main changes attributed to the methodology

#### — Gender-related changes in commercial agricultural operations

- Improved access to resources (e.g. inputs, training and mechanization) help women to close the yield gap between men and women.
- Improved agency as women get access to their own income, have more say in developing household budgets and have reduced time poverty due to mechanization.
- Community-level changes as a result of women being perceived as equal actors in the value chain (e.g. by the promotion of women in training videos, female extension officers and lead farmers, or women in leadership positions).

#### — Other changes

- Improved food security through sustainable links to commercial agribusinesses and the resultant income security.
- Increased income due to access to higher-value crops, fairer prices and premiums associated with certifications.
- Greater appreciation on the part of agribusinesses of the value of female employees who are often perceived as more detail-oriented in processing/post-harvest positions (e.g. grading and cleaning seeds).

### Key success factors and strengths of the methodology

The following are the key success factors and strengths of the ten principles of success:

- The ten principles are modular (i.e. an agribusiness can select one or several interventions and does not need to apply all ten principles simultaneously). This provides the flexibility needed to tailor the methodology to the mandate of each agribusiness.

- The principles enable agribusinesses to target women’s economic empowerment through two key routes: improving access (to resources) and increasing agency (decision-making power). Ideally principles should be combined to ensure both aspects of women’s economic empowerment are being targeted.
- Some principles are based on a value chain approach (e.g. principles 1 and 2), whereas others are based on a farming as a family business (i.e. household level). This allows agribusinesses to have different entry points and ensures the principles are complementary.

Preconditions to successful implementation of the ten principles:

- The agribusiness needs to clearly understand the gender business case and AgDevCo’s remit. They also must demonstrate a willingness to allocate their own resources to implement gender-based actions or seek external funding. The SDU can contribute to household budgeting training expenses and promotes family farming.
- Women should be consulted for a needs analysis rather than having solutions imposed on them.
- If needed, gender-based interventions should be developed by businesses together with gender experts or internal staff who have benefited from capacity building exercises. The interventions should be piloted before scaling up.
- What gets measured gets done. Clear objectives, key performance indicators and metrics need to be in place to track progress on gender action plans.

### Challenges and measures to overcome them

- Avoiding the development of household conflict (e.g. men’s perception of discrimination)
  - This can be overcome by promoting farming as a family business and by having male gender champions that support women. The champions are identified by the agribusinesses during consultations and interactions during training.
- Funding and human resources required to implement certain gender-based actions
  - Ensure companies are linked to grant providers and/or NGOs that can help to implement gender-based actions cost-effectively.
- Lack of understanding of the gender business case
  - Share practical case studies to ensure businesses understand that empowering women is both beneficial from a social/equity perspective, as well as from a commercial perspective.

### Potential for upscaling

- **Requirements to support upscaling**
  - Strong buy-in by agribusinesses, which includes a reporting mechanism showing progress on gender-based actions.
  - Allocated funds and dedicated team or gender focal person to drive the process.
- **Potential improvements**
  - Networking and connecting agribusinesses to local players and NGOs that can support the business to implement gender-based actions.
  - AgDevCo and the SDU linking Women’s Economic Empowerment experts to agribusinesses where relevant and possible.
- **Adaptation**
  - Ensuring that agribusinesses understand AgDevCo’s remit as a private sector investor and how it can help to empower women in outgrower schemes.

## Potential for replication

### — Key enablers

#### – **Sharing knowledge and lessons learnt widely**

This includes making a strong business case for gender-based actions. In principle it is the task of the agribusiness to report lessons learned to AgDevCo through the annual monitoring process or through quarterly reporting to the SDU. AgDevCo may then consolidate lessons learnt to produce a knowledge-sharing document for wider distribution.

#### – **Partnerships**

Agribusinesses need to partner with relevant stakeholders (e.g. funders and NGOs) to help implement gender-based actions.

#### – **Buy-in by senior management of agribusinesses**

It is crucial that senior management buys into gender-based actions and understands the business case.

## Sustainability of the methodology once project/external input is complete

Sustainability is a key consideration for the SDU. Projects need to be able to continue after grant support has ended. To ensure that this happens the agribusiness must have a clear business case and have the funds to continue the project using its own funding. AgDevCo has different teams (e.g. enterprise development team; environment, social and governance team; agriculture team), each of which provide services to the agribusiness if needed. The teams can send in a video consultant, gender expert or information technology consultant to help the business directly.

The SDU can fund the following types of activities:

- production and dissemination of farmer training materials (e.g. training manuals, posters, videos, graphics) on a range of themes including good agricultural practices, post-harvest loss mitigation, financial inclusion and household budgeting;
- provision and delivery of extension services and other forms of training (e.g. support for salaries, training and bicycles and motorbikes for extension workers, field officers and lead farmers);
- set up and support for the maintenance of information and communication technology systems, including digital farmer management and transparency systems;
- set up of farmer field schools, cooperatives, dynamic agro-forestry farming systems and community nurseries;
- set up of simple mechanization pilot initiatives;
- certifications (e.g. organic, FairTrade, Rainforest Alliance, UTZ) and related audits and traceability activities; and
- capacity building among micro-entrepreneurs working closely with agribusinesses to provide important services to smallholder farmers.

**SECTION 7****RESOURCES****Publications**

- AgDevCo (2017) *Successful models for empowering women in smallholder outgrower schemes*  
[https://www.agdevco.com/uploads/reports/SDU\\_Gender\\_Case%20Study\\_AW\\_digital\\_Jan%202018.pdf](https://www.agdevco.com/uploads/reports/SDU_Gender_Case%20Study_AW_digital_Jan%202018.pdf)
- AgDevCo (2018) *Gender lens investing: the case for empowering women*  
[https://www.agdevco.com/uploads/Case%20Studies%20-%202018/AgDevCo\\_Gender%20report\\_A5\\_AW\\_digital.pdf](https://www.agdevco.com/uploads/Case%20Studies%20-%202018/AgDevCo_Gender%20report_A5_AW_digital.pdf)
- AgDevCo (2018) Gender flyer for agribusiness to realise their full business potential  
[https://www.agdevco.com/uploads/Case%20Studies%20-%202018/AgDevCo\\_Gender\\_flyer\\_AW\\_digital.pdf](https://www.agdevco.com/uploads/Case%20Studies%20-%202018/AgDevCo_Gender_flyer_AW_digital.pdf)

**Blog**

- AgDevCo (2018) Three practical steps agribusinesses can take to help close the gender gap in smallholder outgrower schemes  
<https://www.rafllearning.org/post/three-practical-steps-agribusinesses-can-take-help-close-the-gender-gap-smallholder-outgrower>

**Webinar**

- Women's empowerment in smallholder finance, combining social and business goals for good  
<https://www.rafllearning.org/post/webinar-materials-womens-empowerment-smallholder-finance-combining-social-and-business-goals>





Rural women walking  
in the field in Nepal

©WFP/Santosh Shani

# 14. Joint Programme to Accelerate Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women

PREPARED BY

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## SECTION 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

**Name of the methodology**

**A holistic, integrated approach to accelerate women's empowerment: Joint Programme to Accelerate Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE)**

**Countries with implementation experience**

- **East Africa:** Ethiopia, Rwanda
- **West Africa:** Liberia, Niger
- **Asia:** Kyrgyzstan, Nepal
- **Central America:** Guatemala

**Start/end date**

October 2012 – December 2020

**Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology**

The United Nations JP RWEE is implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

**Purpose of the methodology and the domains of gender inequality that are addressed**

The JP RWEE is based on the premise that an integrated approach to women's empowerment in development projects has multiplying effects that enhance the reach and sustainability of project outcomes. The JP RWEE aims to respond to the diversity of issues rural women face in their daily lives. These issues collectively go beyond the mandate of any one of the four individual United Nations entities. The JP RWEE aims to:

- improve food security and nutrition at the local level;
- create job opportunities to sustain women's livelihoods;
- respond to rural women's identified social and economic needs and add value to existing initiatives;
- partner with rural women's organizations to strengthen their capacities;
- affirm rural women as leaders, decision makers and agents of change for their individual and collective advancement;
- help governments to build more comprehensive national strategies for rural women's empowerment; and
- generate lessons that can strengthen the focus on rural women and girls in agricultural activities.

In addressing the barriers to gender equality in rural settings, the JP RWEE works to address the two components of systemic institutional gender inequalities: social norms and organizations (i.e. formal institutions, formal membership organizations and informal institutions).

**Contribution of the methodology to wider development/organizational/project goals**

A current initiative of the JP RWEE is to establish an evidence base that will facilitate systematic integration of empowerment dimensions into the work of relevant ministries of participating countries, as well as the participating United Nations organizations and other practitioners.

**Target group**

Based on criteria agreed on with the respective national governments and after conducting baseline assessments, the seven countries participating in the JP RWEE focus on two main groups of women:

- the most vulnerable, poorest and illiterate women, who are often bypassed by conventional economic empowerment programmes; and
- women entrepreneurs already organized in producer organizations/cooperatives who have the potential to grow their businesses and contribute to economic revitalization and growth in their communities.

The JP RWEE supports pre-existing or newly established women's groups that, in addition to offering mutual support, have the potential to maximize the impact of programme interventions and ensure the sustainability and replicability of the activities even after the end of the programme.

Indirect beneficiaries are the members of targeted communities in the seven countries who benefit not only from the overall contribution to poverty reduction but also from the numerous sensitization and awareness-raising activities carried out to promote behavioural change and gender equality.

## SECTION 2

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

### Key entry points for applying the methodology

The JP RWEE capacity development strategy operates at three different levels:

- strengthening the individual capacities of rural women producers to address their supply-side constraints, boosting their agricultural productive capacities (e.g. harvesting, storage, processing and marketing), and facilitating their access to remunerative jobs and lucrative markets;
- developing the collective capacities of producer organizations, cooperatives and unions to make their corporate governance more transparent, effective, accountable, gender equitable and age inclusive, as well as supporting the affiliation of informal rural women's groups with formal organizations; and
- enhancing the capacity of duty bearer systems and institutions to respond effectively to rural women's needs and priorities through policy interventions that advance rural women's access to productive resources, services and decent wage employment, and ensure women's equal participation in decision making.

### Implementing partners

The JP RWEE has a governance mechanism that has ensured smooth and transparent implementation and ownership by the main stakeholders, including donors and national counterparts. The mechanism is composed of;

- at the global level – an International Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee;
- at the country level – a National Steering Committee (NSC), which is chaired by the Minister of Agriculture or his/her representative and consists of donors, and includes the four participating agencies, civil society and private sector partners of the JP RWEE and representatives of rural women; and a Technical Working Group (TWG) consisting of representatives of the four United Nations agencies and technical staff of relevant ministries; and
- implementing partners hired at the national level, including international and national non-governmental organizations, to support delivery.

In some countries, implementing partners have also organized a separate coordination group that has helped them to coordinate activities on the ground; present issues or suggestions to the NSC/TWG with one voice; and create a platform for exchanging information and learning from each other's work.

### Process of and criteria for selecting facilitators/champions/mentors

The implementation of the JP RWEE is embedded in the core operations of the four United Nations agencies, and is based on each agency's comparative advantage and innovative methodologies to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. One agency acts as the lead agency in a specific country, and hosts a national coordinator to ensure the sound planning, implementation and sequencing of field activities, and coordinates the work of implementing partners.

In some countries, to maximize learning opportunities, the leaders of women's groups have been selected to voluntarily pass their newly acquired knowledge and skills to other women in their communities who are not directly targeted by the programme. In Guatemala for instance, the women received specific training in this role by the local coordinators.



## Training of facilitators/champions/mentors

The JP RWEE uses a tailor-made, participatory approach for programme design and implementation in each country. This involves consultation with government officials, rural women's groups, youth groups, farmer organizations, implementing partners, other United Nations agencies and civil society organizations. The programme is an umbrella for a wide range of gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives. Consequently, many varied approaches are used depending on the context and implementing partners.

## SECTION 3

## IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

### Key steps in the implementation cycle

#### — Step 1: Context

Reflecting the diversity of the field sites, the following elements were considered in both the design and implementation phases:

- factors affecting the position of rural women, including age, religion, ethnicity, social, economic, political and ecological status;
- formal and informal local gender norms (e.g. ideas about the appropriateness and safety of women in public spaces, and practices, such as early marriage) and the constraints they may impose on the successful implementation of the programme; and
- social dynamics, with particular attention to tensions or conflicts between men and women that may be triggered by any improvements in women's economic status (e.g. spikes in domestic violence that may accompany any gains made by women in terms of economic agency).

#### — Step 2: Strategy

The programme adopts a multitrack strategy aiming to achieve short-, medium- and long-term results. In the short term, the focus is on increasing rural women's production and ensuring their access to income. The medium- and long-term work focuses on promoting gender-responsive policy and legal environments for rural women's economic empowerment and gender transformative approaches at the household and community level to encourage behaviour change.

#### — Step 3: Activities for women's economic empowerment

The JP RWEE offers a comprehensive package of sequenced interventions to support women's economic and social empowerment, combining direct implementation and on-the-ground coordination with other community-level programming. This requires using different training methods on a wide array of topics, which are selected based on the specific needs identified in each country, and with varying frequencies. The main topics include:

- nutrition education and methods for preparing healthy food with locally-available products;
- agricultural techniques to increase the quantity and quality of production;
- value chain development;
- women's rights, including the right to land;
- the establishment and strengthening of producer organizations;
- the creation and management of saving groups;
- literacy and numeracy training;
- business and entrepreneurial development; and
- leadership development for women who already hold leadership positions and simplified modules for other women participants.

#### — Step 4: Gender transformative approaches

For the programme to have a transformative approach, it is important to focus not only on strengthening women's economic opportunities and reinforcing their decision-making capacities as farmers and group members, but also on helping communities understand and challenge the social norms that perpetuate inequalities between women and men. The JP RWEE is working to address these norms at the individual, community, and institutional levels in order to facilitate sustainable change.

At the household level, the JP RWEE is using household methodologies, and particularly the Gender Action Learning System (GALS), a participatory, community-led empowerment methodology that can be adapted to different cultural and organizational contexts. Through a set of pictorial tools, household members build their vision for the future and define strategies for achieving it. Throughout implementation, GALS tools have demonstrated their capacity to (i) transform gender-based power relations; (ii) promote men and women's self-confidence; and (iii) improve livelihoods.

At the community level, the JP RWEE has mainly applied three approaches.

- Community Conversations are conducted by community facilitators who engage the community in self-change processes and help eradicate gender discriminatory practices.
- Dimitra Clubs or Community Listeners Clubs are groups of women and men (mixed or single sex) who organize themselves to bring about changes in their communities, especially addressing discriminatory gender practices and the unequal sharing of household work. Through a solar-powered radio, club members access information, identify challenges and explore ways to overcome these challenges in an inclusive way.
- Awareness-raising and advocacy events are designed and led by rural women activists who organize forum theatres, song contests and other events to demonstrate the dangers of discriminatory social norms or harmful practices (e.g. child marriage), and the high social value of unpaid care work.

At the institutional level, the focus has been on creating evidence on current challenges and priority areas for interventions to enforce rural women's rights to land, resources, social protection and infrastructure. JP RWEE contributions include:

- the production of evidence-based studies to inform policy development and actions for gender equality;
- support to the design and implementation of revised national gender policies and gender policies in agriculture;
- the development of manuals and other operational guidance on designing agricultural interventions that take into account rural women's specific needs; and
- capacity development of government staff and other national stakeholders on gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting and women's rights.

### Average length of the implementation cycle

An ideal implementation cycle would be five years to provide integrated support and work in a sequenced way towards the four main outcomes: improved food security and nutrition; increased income to sustain livelihoods; strengthened leadership; and more gender-responsive policy environment for rural women in agriculture. However, due to the unpredictability of JP RWEE funding, most beneficiaries have been supported for a period of approximately three years.

### Graduation from the methodology

Not relevant.



## SECTION 4

## MONITORING

**Monitoring system**

The JP RWEE has developed a performance monitoring framework with a series of indicators (mostly quantitative) at both the outcome and output levels. These indicators were selected based on the following criteria:

- data that were already collected by the four agencies, in order to avoid creating parallel systems and build on the existing expertise in the country offices;
- applicability to activities implemented in all the countries; and
- ability to aggregate the results in each country at the global level.

The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) has also become an important part of the JP RWEE monitoring system for three main reasons:

- The WEAI was a key component of programme design, as it gave an opportunity to identify needs in some of the participating countries through the baseline assessment.
- The WEAI survey represents the only rigorous tool through which women's empowerment in agriculture can be measured in ways that go beyond quantitative indicators that only look at specific aspects of the JP RWEE (e.g. food security). This has also helped compare and consolidate results among the seven pilot countries, which would otherwise have been difficult due to the different contexts the JP RWEE is operating in.
- The WEAI also supports JP RWEE work at the policy level with the Ministries of Agriculture of participating countries. One area of engagement is the provision of evidence-based studies to inform policy development and, when relevant, the development or revision of national gender policies for the agricultural sector.

**Indicators**

Core indicators included in the performance monitoring framework are listed below.

- **Quantitative**
  - Increased agricultural production of women farmers
  - Income generated by rural women's cooperatives from their sales to WFP and markets
  - The proportion of rural women who are members of land committees
  - The proportion of producer organizations led by women
- **Qualitative**
  - Evidence of improvement of rural women's dietary diversity and consumption patterns
  - Evidence of better quality of life and status of rural women, including individual stories and women beneficiaries' interviews
  - Evidence of rural women's empowerment in intra-household decision making
  - Extent to which national land, food, nutrition, agricultural and rural development policies and laws make provisions for gender equality and women's empowerment

## SECTION 5

## BUDGET

**Main items of expenditure**

- Training activities, including training of trainers, workshops, pyramid learning, group-based learning processes
- Asset distribution (e.g. agricultural tools and inputs, labour-saving technologies)
- Awareness-raising and sensitization activities
- Establishment of revolving funds, including the provision of start-up capital

**Total budget**

A total of almost USD 26 million has been received into the JP RWEE Trust Fund, of which almost USD 22 million has been transferred to participating agencies to support the global and national coordinators and direct implementation.

## SECTION 6

## RESULT

**Number of beneficiaries reached**

Since implementation started at the end of 2014, the JP RWEE has directly reached:

- 61 736 beneficiaries (80% women) and
- 315 688 household members.

**Main changes attributed to the methodology**

Both quantitative and qualitative methods are used to assess whether this pilot approach has been successful in empowering women, and define what empowerment means in a specific context.

Main changes reported as a result of the JP RWEE are:

- 103% average increase in the agricultural production of participating rural women since implementation started;
- USD 1.8 million income generated from sales;
- over 16 000 women organized into saving groups;
- over 80% of producer organizations supported by the JP RWEE are led by women or have women holding key leadership positions;
- approximately 2 000 government officials at all levels (national, regional, district) with enhanced skills on gender mainstreaming, gender-responsive budgeting, women's rights and women's leadership; and
- the national governments of Ethiopia, Guatemala and Nepal supported the development and implementation of gender policies in the agricultural sector.

In addition to these quantifiable results, women have challenged discriminatory practices in order to learn their rights and assume decision-making roles within their homes and communities:

- In Niger, some of the target communities agreed on reducing or eliminating the dowry as a precondition of marriage, and eliminating the harmful belief preventing widows to remarry.
- In Guatemala, the JP RWEE has supported the first indigenous woman running for mayor in the target area of the Polochic Valley.
- In Kyrgyzstan, women beneficiaries had the opportunity to participate in lobbying for a legislative initiative banning child marriage.
- In Ethiopia, women are openly discussing the importance of family planning with their husbands to improve their livelihoods.

Findings from country evaluations in Ethiopia and Kyrgyzstan show that women appreciate not only the increased access to income, diversification of their livelihoods, and the possibility of sending their children to school, but also the opportunity to challenge discriminatory practices, become more knowledgeable about their rights, and have their voices heard in the community and at home.

**Key success factors and strengths of the methodology**

Key success factors that consistently arise in evaluations, country reports, monitoring missions and other exchanges around the JP RWEE include:

- Women's empowerment is a multidimensional process with socio-cultural, familial, legal, political, psychological and environmental dimensions, all of which have to be addressed – in addition to women's economic empowerment – in order to achieve sustainable development. The multilayered approach of the JP RWEE demonstrates that integration and cross-sectoral harmonization is fundamental to realizing the economic rights of rural women.
- The alignment of the JP RWEE with national and global level policies and standards that promote and protect women's economic rights is a key aspect of the programme's success and ownership by participating countries.
- The availability of programmatic tools (e.g. common monitoring and evaluation frameworks, reporting templates, quality assurance checklists) and an operational guidance note ensure that the partnership is efficient.

- The role of dedicated JP RWEE staff (global and national coordinators) is essential to ensure sound performance, progress towards the expected results, and the effective collection and analysis of data and other information.
- Good planning and sequencing are key for providing the comprehensive ‘package’ of interventions used by the JP RWEE, and for avoiding beneficiary fatigue by ensuring there is sufficient time for beneficiaries to absorb, use and pass on their new knowledge to others.
- Working with women in key management positions, in either women-only groups or mixed groups, facilitates the establishment of support networks and the development of participants’ communication and leadership skills.
- Engaging men in programme implementation results in joint efforts to improve livelihoods and secures their buy-in to any transformation process that affects gender roles, workload allocation and economic empowerment.
- The provision of technologies has a proven impact on agricultural productivity and value addition. However, the distribution of these technologies must come after a thorough needs assessment. Also, because technologies are not gender neutral, the right conditions need to be created to make sure the technologies can, and will, be used by women.

### Challenges and measures to overcome them

From an operational perspective, there are four distinct challenges:

- The unpredictability of funding for the JP RWEE continues to be the biggest threat, with the potential to hamper implementation.
- Monitoring and evaluation remain problematic despite the regular progress in implementation. This reflects the lack of baselines in some countries; the different monitoring systems used by the United Nations agencies; and limited local capacities to devise indicators to measure ‘soft’ components of the JP RWEE, including qualitative changes in the lives of women as experienced individually and collectively. To mitigate this, the WEAI is being used as an integral part of JP RWEE activities to build the evidence base and monitor the system.
- In some cases, political instability, changes in government, staff turnover and travel restrictions delayed the provision of planned technical support by both institutional partners and United Nations organizations. The disruptions required additional time for national coordinators to brief new focal points.
- Joint programming might take a relatively long time to set up compared to programmes carried out by individual agencies because it requires the pooling of resources and expertise. Nonetheless, in the long term, the results seem to be more sustainable.

For all activities, the results from monitoring missions and the analysis of documentation showed some common challenges across the countries.

- Certain conditions are required to access markets (e.g. collective bank accounts, quality control certificates, and other official documentation). These conditions, which can be difficult for individual women and women’s groups to meet, are needed to become providers of processed food to either government institutions (e.g. school canteens) or the private sector (e.g. restaurants, hotels). Efforts have been made to create virtuous circles that support women’s production, productivity and profit making.
- Leadership development is a long-term process that requires working with rural women who already hold leadership positions as well as with all beneficiaries so that they can be accompanied in the process of transformative leadership. The JP RWEE works at different levels (individual, community, institutional) to support women in making their voices heard, and provides specific support to women (e.g. indigenous women) who find it difficult to access fora where their voices can be heard.
- Limited access to and control over land, be it individual, group or communal land, presents a challenge to rural women beneficiaries to expand their productive base. The JP RWEE has worked extensively to raise awareness about land rights with local institutions in order to increase and improve the inclusion of women’s needs and rights in land policies.

- Even if sound evidence is provided to inform policy, the creation of decent rural employment largely depends on a strong commitment from national policy makers to promote inclusive social protection mechanisms and safe occupational practices across the agricultural sector.
- Changing social norms is a long-term process that is often not compatible with the short lifespan of a programme. However, integrated interventions with a strong focus on individual, community and institutional ownership can help accelerate the results.

### Potential for upscaling

At the country level, in order to continue and scale up the initiative, the JP RWEE country teams have already started engaging with non-traditional donors (e.g. China). Experiences of collaborations with the private sector (e.g. Orange in Liberia) could also be replicated in other contexts.

An assessment of the current level of capacity of women's organizations supported by the JP RWEE could help identify other United Nations partners that could add value to the initiative; for example, with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to strengthen value chain development, or with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to support the creation and promotion of decent job opportunities.

### Potential for replication

JP RWEE is in the process of developing a 'how-to' guide to joint programming for a holistic approach to women's economic empowerment. It will outline the practical aspects of programming and provide guidance and specific tools for planning, setup, implementation and evaluation.

### Sustainability of the methodology once project/external input is complete

Since the inception of the JP RWEE, close attention has been paid to the sustainability of the results achieved at all levels of implementation. This has been done in close collaboration with local governments in alignment with national policies and with the involvement of direct beneficiaries and communities in the design of programme activities. The focus has been on:

- investing in a more gender-responsive policy environment and national strategic frameworks by:
  - supporting the development of gender strategies in the agricultural sector;
  - strengthening national coordination and collaboration on agriculture and rural development issues, with a special focus on rural women's needs; and
  - providing capacity building to agricultural stakeholders in the use of gender analysis, gender budgeting and other gender mainstreaming tools throughout the planning, budgeting and monitoring stages;
- capacity development for individual women and for those in producer organizations in areas such as:
  - crop production, nutritional habits, food storage, entrepreneurial skills and sustainable agriculture techniques, as well as management and leadership and existing legal frameworks on family law and economic rights;
  - access to finance, including the provision of women-friendly financial services; and
  - market access;
- community awareness raising about women's rights through an array of context-specific methodologies aiming at behavioural change, and working within households, using GALS for example, and between households, for example with Dimitra Clubs in Niger or Community Conversations in Ethiopia.

## SECTION 7

## RESOURCES

**Publication**

- Chiarini A (2017) *Enhancing Opportunities for Rural Women's Employment and Poverty Reduction*, Presented at Expert Group Meeting on "Strategies for Eradicating Poverty to Achieve Sustainable Development for All" United Nations Headquarters, New York  
[https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2017/04/Azzurra-CHIARINI-EGM-Strategies-for-Eradicating-Poverty-Chiarini\\_ok.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2017/04/Azzurra-CHIARINI-EGM-Strategies-for-Eradicating-Poverty-Chiarini_ok.pdf)

**Websites**

- JP RWEE website  
<http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/RWF00>
- JP RWEE YouTube channel  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMuXLipjcfvQW-M9v0HH36A>





GENNOVATE focus group discussion with middle-income men in the mid-hills of Nepal  
©Bioversity International/Marlène Elias

# 15. GENNOVATE

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## SECTION 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

**Name of the methodology****GENNOVATE****Countries with implementation experience**

- **Asia:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh), Indonesia, Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam
- **Africa:** Burkina Faso, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe
- **Latin America:** Colombia, Mexico

**Start/end date**

- Data collection start: April 2014
- End: 2018

**Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology**

- Executive Committee members from the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR): International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) (Chair); Bioversity International; International Potato Center (CIP); International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)
- Other participating CGIAR centres: International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR); and WorldFish
- Resource persons from: Cornell University, University of Brighton, Wageningen University

**Purpose of the methodology and the domains of gender inequality that are addressed**

GENNOVATE was designed as a diagnostic study to understand gender norms in order to inform the subsequent design of interventions, programmes and policies. It was not designed as an intervention that would itself transform gender norms. However, several of its instruments can be applied to stimulate critical reflection and dialogue on gender norms as part of a larger set of gender transformative interventions.

Gender norms related particularly to agricultural and environmental innovation and technology adoption include:

- the distribution of labour and benefits;
- decision making;
- participation in projects, programmes and markets;
- access to and control over assets; and
- mobility.

**Contribution of the methodology to wider development/organizational/project goals**

- Enhancing the gender responsiveness of CGIAR Research Programmes in terms of targeting, priority setting, theories of change, and investments in agricultural research for development
- Advancing gender transformative outcomes of agricultural research and development interventions at scale for the widespread equitable uptake of innovations
- Building the evidence base and actions to address the role of gender norms in relation to agricultural technology adoption and development processes

**Target group**

GENNOVATE is applied with an equal number of women and men, representing a cross-section of:

- poor and middle-income adults (over 25 years old); and
- youth (18 to 25 years old)

It is used in separate focus group discussions (i.e. young women; poor women; middle-income women; and a parallel three groups with men). Focus group discussion instruments are different for poor- and middle-income adults and youth, although some questions overlap to enable comparative analyses.

## SECTION 2

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

**Key entry points for applying the methodology**

- Individuals (semi-structured individual interviews, key informant interviews)
- Groups (focus group discussions)

**Implementing partners**

Partners include universities and research organizations, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN) and Grameen Communications.

A full list of GENNOVATE's 27 partner institutions can be found at:

<https://gennovate.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Gennovate-team-members-and-partners-1.pdf>

**Process of and criteria for selecting facilitators/champions/mentors**

Facilitators are members of the research team with social science skills and capacities in conducting participatory fieldwork (interviews, focus group discussions).

The field team consists of at least four members: (i) at least one woman and one man who have strong experience facilitating focus group discussions, and (ii) one woman and one man who serve as notetakers during the sessions and are responsible for complete narrative and numerical documentation of the data collection activities.

The women on the team facilitate and take notes for the women's focus group discussions, and the men facilitate and take notes for the men's focus group discussions.

**Training of facilitators/champions/mentors**

GENNOVATE's data collection instruments are challenging to implement in the field. Every field team member requires training and field-based practice to acquire the necessary information and skills to use these instruments. The GENNOVATE model of training for application of the full methodology features a five-day training of trainers programme that combines classroom and field-based sessions for the principal investigators and/or field team leaders. For training the field teams, an additional one or two days are highly recommended to allow time for further practice and review, especially for the requirements for managing the rating activities and visuals during the focus groups and taking thorough field notes.

A detailed training agenda is available in the annex of the GENNOVATE methodology guide (See section on resource materials).

Topics for the training include:

- study purpose and comparative case study methodology;
- brief roundtable discussion of sample cases and innovations;
- introduction to preparing for fieldwork; and
- detailed review of study questions and use of participatory tools.



## SECTION 3

## IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

**Key steps in the implementation cycle**

The GENNOVATE approach is used to conduct gender-responsive research and explore gender norms in a wide variety of contexts, including initiatives focused on climate-smart-agriculture, conservation agriculture, mechanization, farmer training events, natural resource management and nutrition.

A step-by-step guide to each tool that comprises the GENNOVATE methodology is provided in the methodology guide. For all tools, the following steps apply:

- Step 1: Training of trainers
- Step 2: Sampling
- Step 3: Mobilizing participants
- Step 4: Discussions/interviews with participants
- Step 5: Data analysis and, ideally, sharing of findings with communities to stimulate further reflection

Some of the innovative GENNOVATE tools include:

- **Ladder of Life:** This is a focus group tool used when conducting discussions/interviews with poor women and men that explores their understanding and interpretations of different aspects of well-being and poverty trends in their community, and the key factors and processes that are seen as shaping these dynamics. (See *Ladder of Life: Qualitative data collection tool to understand local perceptions of poverty dynamics*)
- **Vignettes:** The ‘vignette’ data collection method can be employed for exploring intra-household decision-making dynamics and perceptions of the social acceptability of different behaviours by women and men. (See, for example, *Using vignettes to explore gender dimensions of household food security and nutrition*, where the vignettes were used to map the engagement of household members along the nutrition pathway)
- **Ladder of Power and Freedom:** This is a qualitative tool whose purpose is to provide meaningful contextual and comparative evidence of local men’s and women’s assessments and interpretations of the levels of agency in their lives, and the key factors and processes that they perceive as shaping their capacities for making important decisions. (See *Ladder of Power and Freedom: Qualitative data collection tool to understand local perceptions of agency and decision making*)

The documents on these tools may be found at Gender Resources and Tools page of the GENNOVATE website (See section on resource materials).

**Average length of the implementation cycle**

Comprehensive application of one full case study lasts approximately one week.

**Graduation from the methodology**

Not relevant

## SECTION 4

## MONITORING

**Monitoring system**

Not relevant.

However, GENNOVATE could be used to monitor changes in gender norms and agency if applied longitudinally or before and after an intervention. The methodology also asks participants to reflect on changes they have experienced in norms over the past decade.

**Indicators**

Not applicable

**SECTION 5****BUDGET****Main items of expenditure**

- Field team time and travel to study communities
- Time required for data analysis

**Total budget**

- Approximately USD 10 000 per case study

**SECTION 6****RESULTS****Number of beneficiaries reached**

To date GENNOVATE studies have been conducted in 27 countries, covering 137 communities and 7 500 rural participants (50% women, 50% men), representing (as per the sampling):

- one-third poor adults (women and men)
- one-third middle-income adults (women and men)
- one-third young (18 to 25 years old) women and men

**Main changes attributed to the methodology**

- **Gender-related changes**
  - Critical consciousness, reflection and awareness of gender norms among community members and research teams
  - Gender-responsive and gender transformative design of projects and initiatives

**Key success factors and strengths of the methodology**

- Highly interactive tools stimulate the engagement of, and critical reflection by, participants.
- Topics broached are very relevant to participants' lives, and the participants appreciate the opportunity to discuss them.
- Engagement with different groups (based on gender, age, socio-economic status) offers perspectives on how gender norms vary across groups.
- Allows attention to be given to a specific context and comparisons to be made across contexts.
- Provides insights into the nuanced, negotiated and fluid ways in which gender norms operate.
- Facilitates transparent reflection by researchers on how gender norms are (re)produced through research processes or applied interventions.

**Challenges and measures to overcome them**

- Sessions cover several topics and can be long.
- Session guides can be revised and shortened, or sessions can be split into more than one sitting

**Potential for upscaling**

- **Requirements to support upscaling**
  - Ensuring or strengthening the qualitative research capacities of field teams and researchers conducting analyses
  - Resources to spend a week in a village in order to engage participants from different social groups
- **Potential improvements**
  - The next steps are to integrate GENNOVATE tools into gender transformative approaches that pursue dialogues with community members on gender norms as part of a longer-term engagement process.
  - Systematic sharing of GENNOVATE findings to participant communities would encourage dialogue across gender and social groups.



### — Adaptation

- The full methodology can be broken down into separate focused instruments to illuminate or generate critical reflection and discussion on particular topics.
- As noted above, GENNOVATE was designed as a diagnostic study, but its tools can be integrated into gender transformative approaches.
- GENNOVATE can be used not only to understand gender norms in a given time and place and among different social groups, but also to monitor changes in norms if applied at different points in time.

### Potential for replication

The full methodology has already been replicated in 137 communities in 26 countries.

### Sustainability of the methodology once project/external input is complete

Not applicable

## SECTION 7

## RESOURCES

### Publications

- GENNOVATE research reports  
<https://gennovate.org/research-reports/>
- GENNOVATE methodology  
[https://gennovate.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/GENNOVATE-Methodology\\_Feb2018\\_FINAL.pdf](https://gennovate.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/GENNOVATE-Methodology_Feb2018_FINAL.pdf)
- 15 tools for gender scientists and non-gender scientists derived from GENNOVATE  
<https://gennovate.org/gender-tools-and-resources/>
- Special issue with GENNOVATE findings and other GENNOVATE articles  
<https://gennovate.org/publications/>

### Websites

- GENNOVATE website  
[www.gennovate.org](http://www.gennovate.org)

### Videos

- Multimedia/videos  
<https://gennovate.org/multimedia/>

# Gender transformative approaches for food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture

A compendium of fifteen good practices

Integral to Agenda 2030's commitment to leaving no-one behind is to redress gender inequality once and for all. And yet, in many parts of the world, rural women and girls still face substantial and systemic gender-related barriers. Treating the symptoms of gender inequality, such as unequal access to productive resources, has not been enough to create lasting change.

Gender transformative approaches (GTAs), that tackle the root causes of gender inequality, have gained traction in the past few decades in the field of rural and agricultural development. These approaches can be valuable vehicles to drive food security and nutrition, increase agricultural production in a sustainable manner, and contribute to inclusive economic growth. GTAs have been found to revolutionize the lives of women, men, their households and communities, and improve project performance, impact and sustainability.

This compendium illustrates 15 good practices that shine a light on successful GTAs and experiences that contribute to positive gender-related and non-gender related transformational changes towards food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture and rural development.



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