



Workshop Report: AAS-2012-31

## Building Coalitions, Creating Change: An Agenda for Gender Transformative Research in Development



RESEARCH  
PROGRAM ON  
Aquatic  
Agricultural  
Systems

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## **Please cite this report as:**

CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems. (2012). Building Coalitions, Creating Change: An Agenda for Gender Transformative Research in Development Workshop Report, 3-5 October 2012, Penang, Malaysia. CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems. Penang, Malaysia. Workshop Report: AAS-2012-31.

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## Executive Summary

There is compelling evidence that increased gender equity can make a significant contribution towards alleviating poverty and increasing food security. But past efforts to integrate gender into agricultural research and development practice have failed to address the inequalities that limit women's access to agricultural inputs, markets, resources and advice.

**A Gender Transformative Approach (GTA)** goes beyond just considering the symptoms of gender inequality, and addresses the social norms, attitudes, behaviors and social systems that underlie them. The CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems (AAS) has placed the GTA at the heart of its gender strategy. This workshop was an opportunity for researchers, practitioners and donors working in this area to address the challenge of how to translate this approach into actual research and development practice.

The workshop began by looking back over four decades of gender development research. Although there have been some successes in integrating gender in agriculture, participants felt that the changes have not been sufficiently deep, widespread or sustained. Barriers to success have included the lack of a strong and coherent narrative with which to influence decision-makers; the hesitation of agencies to engage with the political dimensions of women's empowerment; and the relatively low status of social scientists within CGIAR.

The workshop was inspired by examples of success. Several participants from the health sector reported on gender transformative interventions that have successfully delivered changes in attitudes and behavior. They all stressed the importance of firstly encouraging the buy-in of staff, followed by the need to engage both men and women, and the relatively intensive effort required to achieve change. They also shared their concerns on scaling up and sustaining their successes.

Participants went on to recommend a set of enabling changes that are needed if we – at WorldFish, across CGIAR, and more generally in agricultural research for development – are to effectively adopt a GTA.

- Firstly, there is work to be done within our own organizations. We need to make a strong case for a GTA to our own colleagues, to build their commitment and understanding. Capacity building is required to equip staff with the awareness, capability and skills to drive this agenda forward. Accountability for delivering gender transformation should be encouraged via performance assessments. Strong leadership is also vital to build support for the GTA and align key institutional processes behind it.
- Secondly, we need to work with a new set of strategic partnerships and collaborations, in order to benefit from a range of remits and areas of expertise. For example, CGIAR does not work directly on social and political change, but can partner with others that do.
- Thirdly, we must foster an evaluative culture that helps us learn from our experimental pilots.
- Fourthly, we need to engage policymakers and funders on the need for a GTA, starting with those organizations that already have good gender policies in place.

The workshop also considered the characteristics of a GTA for agricultural research and development. Participants began to articulate the core components of a GTA through three avenues, pursued in separate discussion groups. The first group developed a preliminary vision and Theory of Change for GTA; the second developed core principles of a GTA; and the third identified a set of gender transformative research questions.

The following core characteristics of a GTA emerged from these discussions.

- The research process must be iterative, dynamic and enable learning.
- Scientists may be required to move from the socially and politically neutral stance that they have traditionally held.
- A better understanding of people and their context will help to set the research agenda.
- Research will need to be multi-level to account for how gender and other forms of inequality are created and maintained, through intersecting practices within the household, community, market and state.
- Research must examine power relations, with the aim of changing those behaviors, norms and structures underlying social inequalities, in order to facilitate sustainable social change.
- Both social and material outcomes are desired.

The workshop recommended that a GTA should be adopted alongside, not instead of, existing efforts to reverse gender disparities in resources, technologies and markets. It is through this pairing that improved social and material outcomes can be achieved, with the expectation that when achieved together, both types of outcomes will be more lasting than if achieved individually.

This workshop was just the start of a process of continuing dialog and emerging new partnerships. A series of next steps were agreed; the first of which is to share the outcomes of this workshop with the other CGIAR Research Programs, all of which are integrating gender.

## Introduction

The challenges of poverty and hunger continue to plague the world, despite significant investments in agricultural research and development. Agricultural research models have changed over the years in response to demands to make them more efficient and responsive. For several decades, there have been arguments for, and evidence of, the contributions towards alleviating poverty and increasing food security that can be made if gender disparities are addressed. These are achieved through improved access to agricultural inputs, markets, resources and advice. Projects and programs have made efforts to integrate gender into agricultural research and development practice to reduce these gaps. However, gender disparities persist and continue to undermine the efforts of agricultural researchers to tackle poverty and hunger. Clearly, what we're doing is not bringing us the results to which we aspire.

This calls for profound changes in the way we approach gender integration in agricultural development. One such change involves acknowledging that many past approaches have focused on redressing the symptoms of gender inequality – the gender gaps – without also addressing their underlying causes. **A Gender Transformative Approach (GTA)** goes beyond just considering the symptoms of gender inequality, and addresses the social norms, attitudes, behaviors and social systems that underlie them. However, mainstream agricultural research and development practice has not adequately engaged with this approach and continues to design interventions that only address material constraints. These interventions are necessary but insufficient for achieving sustained positive change.

For example, CGIAR is aiming to achieve improved health and nutrition through its suite of new CGIAR research programs (CRPs). Nutrition is a major function of a caregiver's time and workload, and typically concerns intra-household decision-making with regard to what to produce and how to allocate food, along with decisions concerning the buying and selling of food and income disposal. Caregivers are often women who, in many contexts, may not have much control over the allocation of their labor time to farm or

domestic tasks, or over the types and quality of food purchased. The transformation of gender roles and norms can play a valuable role in achieving beneficial health and nutritional outcomes by increasing women's voices in decisions and men's understanding of their own role in family nutrition.

Gender is a cross-cutting theme for the CRPs and the Aquatic Agricultural Systems (AAS) Program has placed a transformative approach at the heart of its gender strategy. Translating this strategy into actual research and development practice poses a considerable challenge, as there is little documented experience in the agricultural sector to draw from, and significant innovation is required.

This workshop brought together researchers, practitioners and donors who are interested and engaged with GTAs. It provided a venue for the exchange of views and experiences on critical GTA themes. It was an opportunity to reflect on what works and what doesn't in the application of GTAs in agriculture and other sectors. It was also a chance to brainstorm ways to put GTAs into practice in agricultural research, for the AAS Program, CGIAR and other interested agencies, and to build partnerships with others.

*"We see getting a gender transformative approach right as fundamental to achieving our goals."*

Steve Hall, WorldFish

## Learning from the past: forty years of gender in agricultural development

To learn from past developments, the workshop participants looked back over the last forty years of gender and agricultural development. This was done to: understand the purchase the terms 'women' and/or 'gender' received in agricultural research at different points in time; recognize that gender transformative concepts and frameworks already exist; and highlight enabling and constraining factors for moving these ideas into the mainstream.

Interest in this issue emerged from the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The first milestone was Ester Boserup's 1970 book, *Woman's Role in Economic Development*, which was hugely influential in inspiring the 'Women in Development' (WID) approach and making women part of the development agenda. In 1975, the first 'World Conference on Women' called for an end to gender discrimination and the integration and full participation of women in development. In 1976, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, now merged into UN Women) was created to advance women's rights and gender equality.

In the 1980s, WID became more fully institutionalized, in part through the development of approaches for analyzing gender. The Harvard and Moser Frameworks were the first of their kind and encouraged the collection of sex-disaggregated data. The Harvard Framework was, and remains, particularly influential in the agricultural sector as a straightforward, technical tool to obtain information on women's and men's work and resources. In 1985, the third 'World Conference on Women' in Nairobi, Kenya, started to look more closely at gender identity and the intersections between religion, ethnicity and caste. Women's roles in participatory plant breeding started to become accepted.

In the 1990s, the backlash against feminism and the financial crisis led to gender and agricultural development being given a lower priority. Despite this setback, there were advances; inheritance law was reformed in India and China, and issues such as violence against women and wage parity were also considered. There was a growing awareness of the increasing participation of women in the agricultural sector, referred to as the 'feminization of agriculture'.

Naila Kabeer developed a more conceptual and complex approach for the analysis of gender relations and institutions, called the Social Relations Framework. Her work, among others', contributed to a shift over this decade from a focus on women in development to a focus on gender and development.

Since 2000, women's empowerment and particularly their economic empowerment have figured prominently on the policy agenda. For example, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) commissioned the development of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index to measure the empowerment, agency and inclusion of women in the agricultural sector. The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) also funded a multi-year research program on Pathways to Women's Empowerment. However, it is debatable how much the 'empowerment' agenda has achieved. The term has been co-opted by a range of agencies and used in ways that obscure the term's original feminist-political intent. This means that its use no longer represents a social change agenda, and can often simply mean that women participated in an event or received access to a resource such as a microcredit.

More recently, there has been an upsurge in attention on women and/or gender in the publication of flagship reports, conferences, institutional gender policies and renewed rhetoric about the importance of women to the agricultural sector.

In reviewing this history, the workshop participants generally agreed that, although there have been some successes, the changes seen have not been as deep, widespread or sustained as they would want. Some important 'lone voices' within gender and development have articulated transformative ideas or approaches, but these have failed to gain influence or widespread recognition in mainstream research and practice in agriculture. Examples include a major Institute of Development Studies conference on 'The Continuing Subordination of Women in the Development Process'; Anne-Marie Goetz's book *Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development*; and Naila Kabeer's Social Relations Framework.

There has often been a lack of permeability of new ideas and concepts from one discipline or organization to another. For example, there has been poor collaboration between the natural and social sciences within CGIAR – although it was noted at the workshop that the Rockefeller Foundation's Social Science Research Fellowship in Agriculture has been important in helping to break down this boundary. Getting transformative ideas to permeate practice has been another challenge, as the ideas are complex and challenge the status quo. In addition, where there has been good policymaking it has often been undermined by poor implementation.

Reflecting further on the reasons limiting the uptake of gender transformative ideas and approaches, the workshop identified several themes. Some of these were particular to CGIAR; others were more broadly based.

- Gender research for development has lacked compelling narratives with which to influence decision-makers and attract funding. Instead, it has ducked and weaved, aligning itself with the shifting demands of funders, losing its core political content, and failing to capitalize on important conceptual and practical innovations and developments.
- Social scientists working in CGIAR have lacked status, and their work has been viewed as less reputable and legitimate than that of their natural science counterparts. This has led many to concentrate on meeting the demands of their natural science colleagues. In the process, they have become disconnected with social scientists working in other sectors, diluted their content and lost the rigor of their disciplines.
- Gender research in agricultural development has mainly relegated gender scientists to a marginal role at the end of the research process; their focus has been on ensuring or enhancing the adoption of technology. And the 3–4 year

project cycles that characterize such research are too short for transformational research.

- There has been a failure to invest in the organizational culture change that is needed to address gender effectively. As a result, widespread understanding of the relevance of, and heartfelt commitment to, a social change agenda is yet to happen within most agricultural development institutes.

Identifying the factors that have limited gender integration in agriculture was an important first step in understanding what research programs and organizations need to do differently. For example, what is the program's compelling narrative underscoring the need for GTAs? Who within our organizations needs to be convinced about the GTA? How deeply do they need to engage with it? These questions start to be addressed on page 7 of this report.

*"We cannot have empowerment without addressing societal relations."*

Rekha Mehra, ICRW

## Learning from the health sector: first-hand accounts of success

The health sector has been working with a GTA for some time. What has it learnt that we can apply to the agricultural sector? Three workshop participants shared their experiences of interventions that have successfully delivered changes in attitudes and behavior on gender-based issues.

**Augustine Kimonyo** is a gender consultant in Rwanda. He works with a Promundo-CARE Rwanda project on violence against women. The project works closely on influencing the norms and attitudes of men and women who were involved with a microfinance scheme (see Box 1).

**Frederick Kinto** of the Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University, Uganda, works on the Gender Roles Equality and Transformations (GREAT) project in the north of the country. The project aims to encourage gender equitable norms, attitudes and behaviors to improve health outcomes for 10- to 19-year-olds (see Box 2).

**Diane Lindsey** of Helen Keller International has worked on a range of successful interventions in health, nutrition and agriculture, including a CARE project in Sierra Leone that encouraged teenagers and parents to discuss adolescent reproductive health issues.

Some common lessons and concerns emerged from their diverse experiences.

- All three stressed the importance of developing real buy-in and transformative change from an organization's own staff first. This should not be short-term gender-sensitization training but longer term, more intense, experiential and reflective.
- When addressing gender issues, men must be involved in the process as well as women. There is evidence that failing to involve men in such interventions can lead to resentment and a worsening of gender attitudes and relations.
- Culture is more flexible than is sometimes thought and people will happily drop those parts of it that are not working for them. However, some norms, such as religious ones, are more intractable than others. Social mapping may help to identify where change is most likely to take place.
- Interventions are not always about dropping negative cultural aspects; they can also involve reclaiming positive cultural practices that have fallen into decline.
- The first individuals to change may be socially vulnerable, and mechanisms need to be built to deal with these issues.

They reported that substantial changes in attitudes and behavior can be seen, sometimes after only a few months' work. However, they attached caveats to these successes. Firstly, such changes may not be durable. Some of the projects discussed at the workshop involved intensive efforts with a relatively small proportion of the community, and there is a danger that the behavior and attitudes of the wider community will gradually pull these recipients back towards the status quo. It was agreed that durable social change requires consistent effort over time and must ultimately involve the whole community in a systemic approach. This approach should involve working with schoolchildren and young people.

Secondly, how can such intensive projects be rolled out more widely without losing their effectiveness? Can self-sustaining systems be created? Scale-up is made more problematic by the fact that the issues involved are usually highly contextualized and local. One suggested solution was to use the mass media. For instance, the workshop heard about the 'Auntie Stella' program in Sierra Leone that addressed adolescent reproductive health. Part of this project was a radio program that encouraged teenagers to talk about sex, life and relationships. The country's Department of Education adopted this program when the project ended and it is still running today.

*"Transforming attitudes and norms is a long-term project. It's like planting a seed – it will die unless you continue to feed and nurture it."*

Diane Lindsey, Helen Keller International

**Box 1.** Engaging with men and women to improve project outcomes.

CARE International's Village Savings & Loan (VSL) programs in Africa use microfinance to empower women economically. However, the impact is limited if household decision-making continues to be dominated by men. A process of action research was used to engage with both female VSL beneficiaries and their male partners. These interventions resulted in more negotiation between couples and increased the benefits of the scheme when compared with financial capacity-building activities exclusively developed for women.

[www.promundo.org.br/en/news/promundo-and-care-rwanda-publishes-a-manual-on-the-involvement-of-men-as-partners-in-women-economic-empowerment/](http://www.promundo.org.br/en/news/promundo-and-care-rwanda-publishes-a-manual-on-the-involvement-of-men-as-partners-in-women-economic-empowerment/)

**Box 2.** Addressing gender norms to improve reproductive health and reduce gender-based violence.

Backed by USAID, a partnership between Pathfinder, the Institute of Reproductive Health (Georgetown University, USA) and Save the Children is focusing on gender issues in northern Uganda. The GREAT project first carried out research among adolescents aged 10–19, before using the results to develop, pilot and scale up interventions to improve reproductive health and reduce gender-based violence among young people. One intervention saw the project's research findings turned into a radio drama, which was broadcast by a local media partner to promote discussion and begin to change gender norms, attitudes and behaviors in post-conflict settings.

[www.pathfinder.org/our-work/projects/gender-roles-equality-and-transformations-uganda.html](http://www.pathfinder.org/our-work/projects/gender-roles-equality-and-transformations-uganda.html)

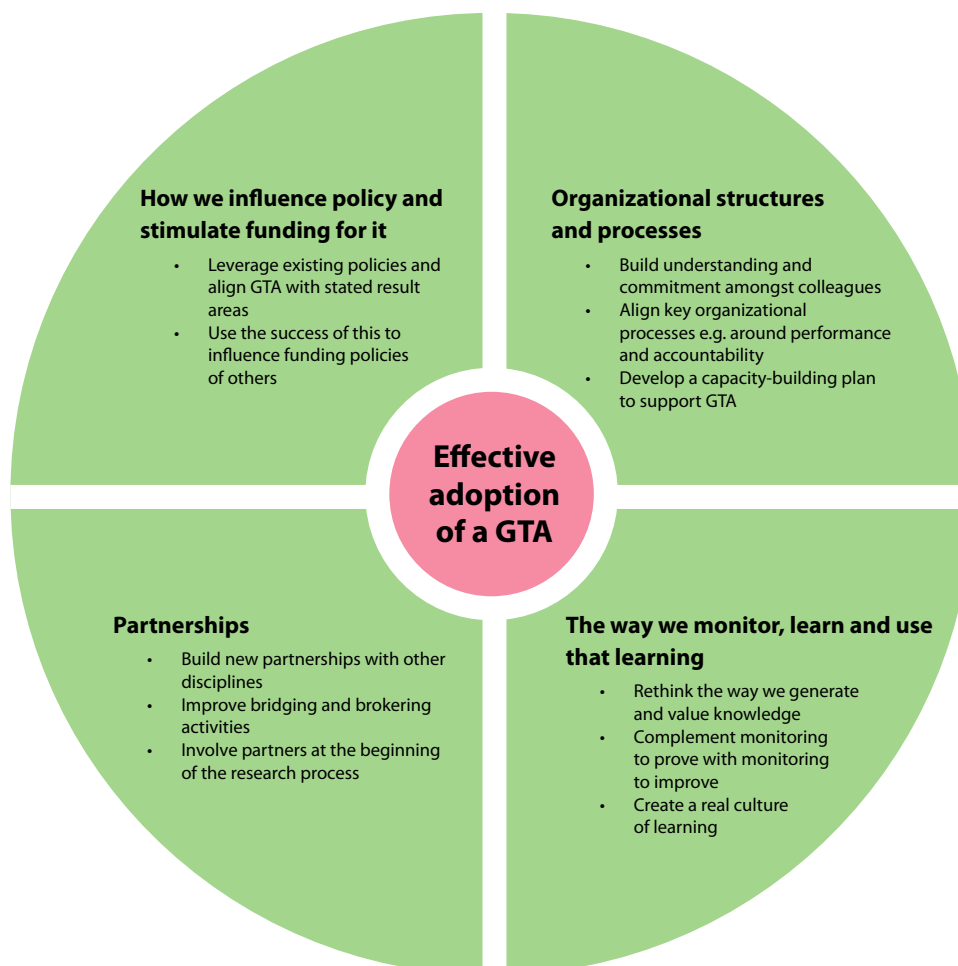
## What needs to be done to enable a GTA?

The GTA approach is new and complex, and requires new ways of thinking and working. To be adopted effectively, a number of enabling changes need to be put in place (Fig 1). Four arenas where change is needed are:

- Within our organizational structures and processes.

- In the types of partnership and coalition our organizations form.
- In the way our organizations learn from, monitor and evaluate research.
- In the way our organizations work with policymakers and funders.

Figure 1. Actions to enable effective adoption of GTA.



### Organizational structures and processes

Applying a GTA is a new step for organizations such as WorldFish and CGIAR. But, as workshop participants recognized, we should not be talking about how to make this approach fit into the status quo, but what needs to change within our organizations for it to have a fighting chance of success.

Research organizations need to start by making a strong case for a GTA to staff, to build their commitment and understanding. This requires a clearly articulated explanation of the vision behind the GTA: what it is and how it contributes to the organization's institutional and program goals. Real-life case studies should be compiled and used to demonstrate that this approach can help ensure that the organization's research has a lasting impact and will increase the reach and use of its products. These case studies need to be simple and illuminating stories that help scientists relate the GTA to something they have seen in the field.

This includes linking GTAs to challenges beyond those facing us today. The case for supporting GTAs should make it clear how this approach will increase resilience to future challenges. For example, the increases in agricultural efficiency that gender equity brings are necessary to compensate for the detrimental effects of climate change. Women's empowerment and gender equity are also

required to meet the social and demographic changes to the agricultural workforce that are already underway.

With a range of evidence and arguments such as this – each of which will resonate with a different sub-set of an organization's audience – it is hoped staff will be persuaded that a GTA is an essential part of what they do. In doing so, the organization should not expect a consensus on gender issues, but should look instead to inspire support and build coalitions for action. Formulating a clear Theory of Change – one that incorporates the contribution of GTAs to shared organizational and program outcomes – is an important part of gaining organizational support. It was a missing piece in past efforts to mainstream gender in organizational practices.

Agricultural research organizations are currently constrained by a lack of expertise in GTA. Although much of this work will be done within partnerships, it will still be necessary to define how much in-house expertise is needed to be respected as credible partners while maintaining identities in areas of specialization. It is also not guaranteed that partners will have expertise in GTAs. A capacity-building plan is needed to equip staff with the awareness, capability and skills to drive this agenda forward. To bring colleagues along and learn together, the plan needs to offer more than a couple of days of gender-sensitization training; instead the approach needs

something more reflective and experiential that engages staff on a deeper level.

This does not mean that all staff within research organizations must become gender specialists. But they do need to be aware of what is required and be able to access the relevant expertise when needed. This requires a definition of the basic level of gender competency that will be required by everyone. For example, a workshop for all those involved, to introduce the concepts and kick-start the dialog, might be useful. Beyond this, each organization needs to differentiate and realistically define what competences are required and by whom (see Table 1). The capacity-building plan should aim to ensure that the right people achieve the appropriate levels of awareness, skills and knowledge. Social scientists within the program need to stay involved with their own discipline, building coalitions of expertise with social scientists working in other sectors and maintaining their continued professional development.

**Table 1.** Levels of gender competency required from staff.

Audience segment	Level of engagement
Gender experts	These are gender specialists with social science degrees: they should develop capacity through engagement in continual professional development with other gender experts who have disciplinary expertise
Senior management	They must be convinced, vocal leaders: this may be achieved through immersion
Gender champions	They must be convinced of and conversant with the arguments on how a GTA can add value to their work and help achieve organizational goals
Other science colleagues	Gender competent: they must be able to recognize the importance of gender to their work and achieving program outcomes, and be able to call on relevant expertise

By deciding who needs to do what with respect to the GTA, research organizations can develop accountability for delivering gender transformation. This will 'push the envelope' beyond what is currently required of scientists. They will need to do more than just demonstrate that women as well as men have benefited from adopting their technology; they will need to take responsibility for improving equity among constituents, such as farmers' groups.

It is likely that some staff will become champions of this approach and powerful advocates who persuade others. They should be rewarded for their efforts. Accountability could also be encouraged through performance assessments. But the outcomes of a transformational approach usually go beyond what any one individual can achieve, so organizations need to consider how they can manage this. One solution is to assess outcomes at the program level. Scientists in different projects would be expected to contribute, to different degrees, to a program goal on equity. In any case, the emphasis should be on encouraging individual conviction and motivation to deliver on the GTA.

These changes are not trivial and will require strong and committed leadership and support from senior management, as well as financial investments. The approach needs to be legitimized institutionally and incorporated into key processes and tools.

*"If you want to adopt a gender transformative approach, the first thing you need to transform is yourself."*

Jeannette Gurung, WOCAN

### Partnerships

Agricultural research organizations cannot expect to change social norms and attitudes on their own; they need to work with other organizations with expertise in this area. The research organizations' role is to use their research to catalyze change, with the help of partners. To do so means forming a new set of strategic partnerships and collaborations with others from the agricultural sector and beyond.

The transformational approach to gender equality is a new concept in agriculture, but others – particularly in the reproductive health sector – have been working with it for some time. By welcoming partnerships with disciplines such as health and education, agricultural research organizations can benefit from others' experiences. In other cases, research organizations will be partnering with institutes that need to learn alongside them.

In forming these partnerships, research organizations will need to improve their bridging and brokering activities and answer the following questions:

- Where are the mutual gains?
- What structures and competences do we require of our partners?
- How do we manage unequal power relations to achieve mutual accountability?
- Where do the boundaries and responsibilities lie for each partner?

This should be a deliberative process, not just an instrumental one with partners involved in the research process from the beginning (see Box 3 below). Some of these new partnerships and coalitions began to form at the workshop.

**Box 3.** An instrumental or a demand-led partnership?

During the 1980s, women started to be included in the process of varietal plant selection. It quickly became clear that their inclusion increased the uptake of new varieties. The practice became popular because it was shown to generate clear efficiencies and aligned well with existing research agendas. This process could be built on; women could be involved from the beginning of the process and inform the research agenda by explaining what they want from a new crop variety. However, the involvement of women in participatory plant breeding remains largely instrumental, rather than demand-led or transformative.

### Learning, monitoring and evaluation

Gender transformative research will involve experimenting with several context-specific approaches. Agricultural research organizations will need to find which of these work best and learn from them. This means that the approach needs to be supported by a culture of learning. Monitoring and evaluation will have two purposes: firstly, it will be needed to assess the impacts and outcomes (monitoring to prove); secondly, it will be required to learn from experiments and develop the research and implementation process (monitoring to improve). These processes will be distinct but interconnected and complementary. Organizations must continue to monitor, but also promote continuous learning.

A GTA raises the challenge of developing and tracking indicators of change in a process-focused monitoring system. The 'bottom up' nature of the AAS Program, for example, implies that evaluation indicators are to be developed in a participatory manner. Inherent in this pledge is a tension between bottom-up and top-down perceptions and goals. The different organizations involved in any research program necessitate different evaluation approaches. But when working together, they may need to use conventional indicators to report progress to donors and the CG Consortium. Although setting targets to 'prove' through conventional methods may create perverse incentives, it may also be successful in providing a 'bare minimum' for gender standards.

*"The gender transformative approach is a bold, contagious experiment."*

Eve Crowley, FAO

There is an opportunity for organizations to link their evaluation indicators to a Theory of Change, to measure and explain their approaches while appreciating diverse expectations and being conscious of causality. It is important to note that the initial accuracy of the Theory of Change is less important than the process of its development. Organizations will need multiple methods that do not abandon the traditional, quantitative methods for monitoring and evaluation, but at the same time pursue monitoring for learning. To do this, an evaluative culture must be instilled and nurtured, with space for reflection and discussion in small groups or in one-on-one dialogs with peers. One example is the Learning Landscape used in the Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) program, which promotes a mentoring and learning environment. By instigating this within agricultural research organizations, we can inspire our partners to do the same.

### The policy and funding environment

Agricultural research organizations need to engage policymakers and funders on this issue and work with both the individuals in these agencies and their systems for implementation. This is perhaps not as onerous as first thought; several organizations already have good gender policies in place and are open to work in this area. These successful interactions can then be used to gain leverage with further organizations. Agricultural research organizations should also look for other ways to align their approaches with the wider existing aims and resources of policymakers and funders, and draw from other fields of work where a GTA has already become legitimized.

The GTA is a new endeavor, and it is risky and experimental. It will lead to agricultural research organizations adopting a suite of approaches, not all of which will bring results. This could be a problem for donors focused strongly on delivering impacts. However, many donors have experience of working in experimental areas such as this, and are prepared to accommodate a portfolio approach where not all strands are expected to deliver. What is important to them is that the research is well thought-out and relevant to the problem.

### What is a GTA?

During the workshop, it was repeatedly stated that the GTA needs a compelling narrative, one that can build support both internally and externally to our organizations. To develop this narrative, workshop participants agreed that a clear articulation of the core elements of a GTA is needed, around which variations can occur in practice to match local circumstances. To develop an understanding of these core elements, participants approached the issue from three angles, with the expectation that the overlapping issues that emerged would be a start in identifying the core of a GTA (Fig 2).

Figure 2. What will GTA look like?



The three topics for discussion were the principles of GTAs; a Theory of Change for GTAs; and new gender transformative research questions. Articulating a vision for GTAs also emerged as an important topic. The outcomes of these discussion topics are outlined below.

### Articulating the vision

The discussion group convened to define a preliminary Theory of Change made a start on articulating the vision, but there is still some way to go. A strong and succinctly expressed vision for a GTA is a difficult task, made harder by the fact that there is still no common understanding of the approach. It is important that the vision makes clear why a GTA is essential to achieving overall goals and program outcomes.

One idea was to describe the GTA as an experimental research topic, capable of delivering international public goods in agricultural research for development. The durability and resilience of the benefits a GTA brings was felt to be another important aspect worth capturing in the vision statement.

The discussion group started off by defining a vision, with productivity as a first step. The term 'productivity plus' was coined to describe one aspect of the improved public goods delivered by a GTA. 'Productivity plus' was described as improvements to productivity that are economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. However, there was debate over whether 'productivity' was the right term to use, or whether another description, such as 'improvements to returns on investments', might be more accurate.

### Principles of GTAs

Principles to guide GTAs to agricultural research should overarch both research and action. They should guide the research process itself, and should also include the desired types of outcome following the introduction of GTAs.

At the workshop, it was agreed that GTAs should focus on normative change in support of gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as be committed to understanding how societies function and change happens. This includes investing in gender and social analysis to understand the distribution of power and the inter-institutional relations influencing development outcomes for



women and men. A GTA means redefining both the research process and outcomes: the process should be bottom-up, leading to policy-relevant research that is useful to addressing the 'real' problems of 'real' people. Overall, the research should be led by an agenda that questions the status quo. The outcomes sought from a GTA to agricultural research include mindset changes among individuals from scientists in research organizations to household members, communities and actors in the market and state. Both material and social outcomes are needed, with both types of outcome interwoven under an umbrella that the group named 'production plus'.

The group further brainstormed the types of outcome falling under 'production plus'. Some of the ideas that emerged were:

- Less drudgery.
- More and better life choices for men/women and boys/girls.
- Promotion of positive ideas of masculinity.
- Increased resource-sharing between women and men.
- More joint decision-making between men and women.
- Increased productivity and incomes, leading to life fulfillment for individuals and families.
- More sustainable use of environmental resources.

### A Theory of Change

The second discussion group felt that a Theory of Change would make explicit the mechanism of what is needed to bring about the changes expressed in the vision statement. It should explain each organization's understanding of the mechanism for bringing about certain specified outcomes, and would serve to bring target populations and the complexity of the power relations surrounding them to the fore.

The Theory of Change will also contribute to the compelling narrative for adopting a GTA. But developing a carefully thought-out Theory of Change will be difficult, because causality in a GTA is complex. There also needs to be a clear distinction between the means and the ends of the GTA. For example, if you help deliver increased equity, have you succeeded? Or is your intervention only successful if the increased equity has a beneficial effect on agricultural production? Not everything agricultural research organizations do will be able to easily incorporate a GTA. Some areas may be particularly fruitful and it may be worthwhile trying to identify 'quick wins'. The Theory of Change could provide a menu of options for addressing norms, some of which will be essential and others negotiable. Organizations would not expect all options to be applicable to all research areas. For example, CGIAR might take on a comprehensive approach, with different research programs addressing different subsets. There may be a Theory of Change for norms around access to markets, and another Theory of Change for norms relating to working conditions, for example.

Research organizations need to motivate their researchers and development partners to conduct pilot studies in these areas. If successful, they will provide proof of concept that others can use and build upon. Our shared understanding of the Theory of Change is likely to become more specific and refined as different organizations make progress, so it should be flexible and adaptable. The Theory of Change will also help us to collectively align processes, such as accountability and monitoring and evaluation, with the expected achievements of using a GTA.

### New gender transformative research questions

How will research questions differ from conventional approaches to gender integration? This discussion group identified a number of overarching factors distinguishing gender transformative research questions from other gender-aware research questions. These questions:

- Examine the nature of relationships.
- Are process-oriented.
- Relate to social change and are dynamic.
- Focus on power and negotiation.

Some sample gender transformative questions include:

- What sorts of interventions contribute to shifting gender relations within different institutions, such as the family, community or market?
- How and why do the motivations underlying livelihood decisions vary for women and men?
- How can community opinion leaders influence change towards gender equality?

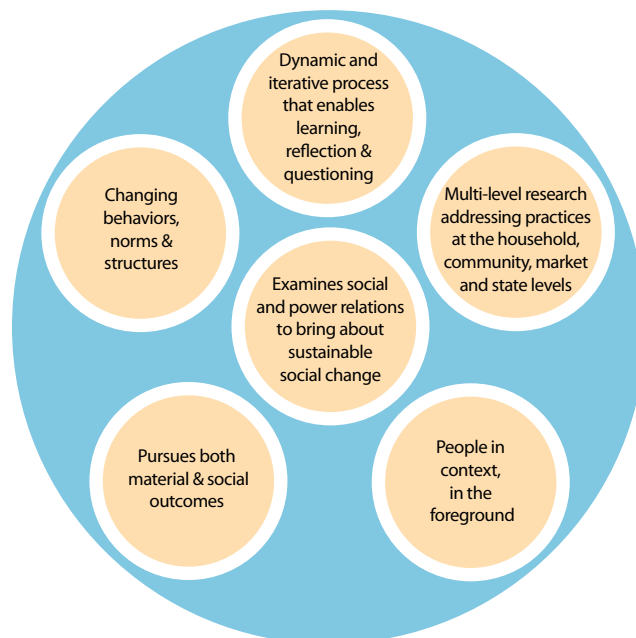
This group noted that the research process needs to be iterative, and researchers self-reflexive.

### Defining characteristics of GTAs

At the heart of the GTA lies the challenge of changing the norms, behaviors and attitudes that underlie gender disparities. Through the outputs above, the workshop began to define some of the characteristics of this approach (Fig 3).

- The research process must be iterative, dynamic and enable learning.
- Scientists may be required to move from the socially and politically neutral stance that they have traditionally held.
- A better understanding of people and their context will help to set the research agenda.
- Research will need to be multi-level to account for how gender and other forms of inequality are created and maintained, through intersecting practices within the household, community, market and state.
- Research must examine power relations, with the aim of changing those behaviors, norms and structures underlying social inequalities, in order to facilitate sustainable social change.
- Both social and material outcomes are desired.

Figure 3. Core characteristics of GTA.



*"A transformational approach is not about telling people how to behave, but it is about encouraging them to question their norms and showing them the costs that these norms carry."*

Jane Brown, Johns Hopkins University

## Conclusions

Through the wisdom and insights of the workshop participants, and their willingness to engage in open and honest cross-disciplinary discussions, the workshop made real progress in developing ideas on how to articulate and deliver a GTA within agricultural research. We have come to understand that to adopt a GTA effectively, we must place it at the heart of what we do. Only then will the necessary changes be put in place in our organizations, partnerships, learning and engagement with policymakers and funders.

It will also be important to persuade both our colleagues and our external stakeholders that this approach is not an add-on, but core to meeting our shared aims of reducing rural poverty and improving food and nutrition security. Generating a narrative for GTA that flows from a vision into a Theory of Change, and that generates testable research questions, is a central next step to the process of bringing GTAs to the mainstream of agricultural research in development.

There are 15 CRPs, all of which must address gender. The AAS program is currently leading the thinking on this issue and the outcomes of this workshop must be shared with the others. Although adopting the GTA seems a big step to take, such strides are not unprecedented for CGIAR – the reduction of poverty is now an accepted part of CGIAR's mandate, although the adoption of this goal was originally controversial.

The workshop was a significant milestone, but it should not be seen as a one-off. Perhaps its most important achievement was to start to build a community of thinkers and practitioners working on this issue. The discussions at this workshop should be the start of a process of continuing dialog; the contacts that were made should be the start of lasting coalitions that will help to turn the idea of a GTA into a reality across the agricultural research community.

*“This approach could transform CGIAR’s ability to produce a sustained impact.”*

Jacqueline Ashby, CGIAR

## Next steps

- The valuable thinking captured from this workshop merits further dissemination. A 4-page policy brief, based on this report, will be produced and distributed.
- It is timely to start discussing this approach with those responsible for addressing gender in the other CRPs. This process will start with a virtual meeting of the appropriate representatives to discuss the outcomes of this workshop.
- The case for a GTA needs to be developed and supported with strong advocacy tools. Case histories, evidence of added value, relevant statistics, testimonies and endorsements need to be gathered and presented in a powerful and compelling way for both internal and external stakeholders.
- The conference website will be turned into a resource hub that supports those working on this issue.
- The valuable networks and connections formed at the workshop will be pursued. New coalitions and partnerships have begun to form at this workshop and these should be built on. A forum, such as a Google Group, will be set up to enable discussions and coalitions to continue.
- Opportunities for further coalition building should be identified. For example, 2014 is the year of family farming,<sup>1</sup> providing a platform for enhancing the visibility of GTAs.
- CRP AAS will hold another workshop on this subject in 2014, by which time the GTA will have been adopted and the first pilot studies will be underway.

*“Transforming attitudes on gender is possible – it can be done”*

Augustine Kimonyo,  
Rwanda Accuracy Development Consult Pvt.

## Program

Day One	
09.00 – 10.30	Welcome, settling in, introductions, outline of agenda
11.00 – 12.30	A journey through the history of Gender Approaches in Agricultural Research
13.30 – 14.45	Successes and struggles so far: a panel discussion
15.15 – 16.15	Learning pod #1 – reflections and discussion
16.15 – 17.15	Plenary: emerging insights and questions. First thoughts on the transformative challenges and opportunities
17.15 – 17.30	Wrap up
Day Two	
09.00 – 09.30	Welcome back! Explanation of the day's discussions
09.30 – 13.00	Parallel discussion groups on transforming organizations; transforming policy and funding environments; transforming the way we monitor, evaluate and learn
14.00 – 14.45	A light interlude
14.45 – 15.30	Learning pod #2 – reflections and discussion
15.50 – 17.15	Plenary: identifying the transformative challenges, exploring their implications
17.15 – 17.30	Wrap up

Day Three	
09.00 – 09.30	Welcome back! Brief outline of the day and agreeing agenda for the morning
09.30 – 10.45	Open space for a deeper dive on 3–4 key transformation opportunities Beginning to 'map the path'
11.15 – 12.30	Plenary: feedback and discussion
13.30 – 15.00	Collaboration, relationships and partnerships – mapping our worlds. Group exercise followed by plenary
15.30 – 16.15	(Option for) Learning pod #3 – reflections and discussion
16.15 – 17.00	Decisions, actions and mandates for moving forward
17.00 – 17.15	Conclusions

<sup>1</sup> www.familyfarmingcampaign.net

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the workshop participants for contributing their experiences, knowledge, insights and ideas. The organizers were Ranjitha Puskur and Paula Kantor, and Lesley Ellarby provided expert facilitation, assisted by Beth Timmers and Miranda Morgan. Elspeth Bartlet of Green Ink took notes and wrote this report; Sarah Tempest of Green Ink edited the report. Beth Timmers created the figures.

## Abbreviations

AAS	CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems
CCAFS	Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security
CGIAR	A global research partnership for a food secure future
CRP	CGIAR Research Program
DFID	UK's Department for International Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GREAT	Gender Roles Equality and Transformations project
GTA	Gender Transformative Approach
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSL	Village Savings & Loan
WIN	Women in Development
WOCAN	Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management

## Participants

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## *With communities, changing lives*

This publication should be cited as: CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems. (2012). Building Coalitions, Creating Change: An Agenda for Gender Transformative Research in Development Workshop Report, 3-5 October 2012, Penang, Malaysia. CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems. Penang, Malaysia. Workshop Report: AAS-2012-31.

The CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems is a multi-year research initiative launched in July 2011. It is designed to pursue community-based approaches to agricultural research and development that target the poorest and most vulnerable rural households in aquatic agricultural systems. Led by WorldFish, a member of the CGIAR Consortium, the program is partnering with diverse organizations working at local, national and global levels to help achieve impacts at scale. For more information, visit [aas.cgiar.org](http://aas.cgiar.org).

Design and layout: Eight Seconds Sdn Bhd.

Printed on 100% recycled paper.

Photo credits: Front cover, WorldFish; back cover, David Mills.

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