

Gender capacity assessment and development methodology and tools: The case of Ethiopia

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Key messages

The gender capacity assessment tool:

1. Offers one methodical approach, within which the parameters employed can be adapted depending on the specific context being researched.
2. Gives baseline information and indicators upon which progress towards gender capacity development can be measured and monitored.
3. Provides a forum for discussion, offering all the actors involved the opportunity to take ownership of the process, indirectly raising gender awareness of the challenges and opportunities to promote gender equity.

Agricultural development interventions in sub-Saharan Africa tend to favour men. They dominate markets and control family income earned from sales. Women do most of the work and receive fewer benefits. Their access to resources and services is often hindered; they have limited control over assets, access to markets, knowledge and social networks, and decision-making authority. In turn, these gender-based resource constraints hamper women's ability to access and use improved agricultural technologies or engage in resource intensive enterprises. Achieving development objectives and gender equity in the sector require developing the capacity of agricultural value chain actors and enablers.

Public policies, and social and cultural norms, frequently act as impediments to gender equity. Many development and research organizations lack the knowledge and skills to integrate gender approaches into their programs. Not just essential to the achievement of gender equity, such approaches can improve food security and nutrition, and drive agricultural transformation. Therefore, addressing gender-inequity will require increased investment in skills and knowledge for value chain actors and enablers. A starting point is the assessment of current gender capacities to give momentum to the implementation of strategic interventions responding to the needs of both men and women.

With these goals in mind, the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) commissioned a team of consultants (Transition International) to support the CGIAR Research Program on Livestock and Fish to design a comprehensive gender capacity assessment methodology and tools, applicable to all four value chain countries: Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda and Nicaragua.

This brief reports on the use of a gender capacity assessment and development methodology and tools in the Ethiopia small ruminant value chain project.

Focus

The tools seek to guide the process of measuring current and potential gender capacities of partners, with the overall goal of tailoring capacity development interventions. They focus on two types of partners—research and development—at national, regional and local levels: agricultural research institutes and universities, agricultural ministries and other related state agencies, and development NGOs operating in the sector.

Core gender capacities

Based on gender organizational capacity assessment frameworks and tools developed by the International Labour Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the development NGOs, SNV and Interaction, bearing in mind the nature of the work undertaken by Livestock and Fish partners, six core gender capacities were identified:

1. Gender analysis and strategic planning
2. Gender responsive programming, budgeting and implementation
3. Knowledge management and gender responsive M&E
4. Effective partnerships and advocacy on promoting gender equality
5. Gender and leadership
6. Innovation in gender responsive approaches

Three levels of analysis

Drawing on the gender capacity assessment and development guide, gender capacity assessment was undertaken at environmental, organizational and individual levels. Enhancing capacities at one level has a positive effect on the others, and vice-versa, as they are highly interdependent. The existing and desired capacities are scored using a scale of 1 to 5: ranging from very low—little or no evidence of the gender capacity—to very high—gender capacity exists and is fully developed and integrated into the organization.

Methodology

Three assessment methods were used: focus group discussion, individual questionnaires and key informant interviews. Focus group discussions were conducted with management and mid-level staff to provide an overall understanding of the organizational gender capacities. Dialogue focused on internal policies, arrangements, procedures and frameworks that allow an organization to operate and deliver on its mandate. Individual questionnaires generated an understanding of capacities across the core competences, while key informant interviews, supplemented by a checklist provided an understanding of the enabling/disabling environment including rules, regulations, power relations and social norms that govern implementation of activities addressing gender disparities.

The method of assessment relies heavily on participant self-evaluation to determine whether gender mainstreaming could be facilitated: by the environment enabling certain perspectives/approaches, by the existence and effectiveness of internal organizational policies and procedures, and by the knowledge, skills, experience and motivation of individuals. The researchers subsequently undertook qualitative and quantitative analyses of the interrelated organizational, individual and organizational findings, and a comparative analysis between partners, and drew conclusions for each of the gender core capacities.

The Ethiopia case

Identifying suitable partners

This step focused on identifying key partners to help in the design, evaluation and piloting of a context-specific gender assessment guide. Several partners in Ethiopia were contacted to gain better understanding of their capacity, interests and potential in partnering in such a process. A review of the gender mainstreaming initiatives and activities in Ethiopia was also conducted.

Consultative meeting with partners

A consultative meeting was held with identified—private, public and civil society—partners to begin rolling out the plan. Partners explained that while several institutions had developed specific gender capacity assessment methodologies, they were narrow in scope and methodically shaky. Very useful information was generated from the meeting to consolidate the guide.

Partner capacity pre-assessment

External consultants and ILRI scientists working on gender issues visited the small ruminant value chain partners in Tigray region in northern Ethiopia. A discussion was held with the partners on their gender capacities, guided by the six core capacities at three overlapping and interdependent levels i.e. the environment, organizational and individual levels. The validity and reliability of the draft methodology and specific assessment matrices were tested on various partner-types, improving understanding of available capacities and roles in the value chain sites.

Joint partner evaluation of the methodology and tools

A subsequent follow-up workshop with development and research partners was organized to jointly review and strengthen the methodology and tools. The participants emphasized that making the methodology more context-specific would improve effectiveness. The findings were used to further modify, refine and finalize the methodology and tools, and pre-tested again.

Implementation

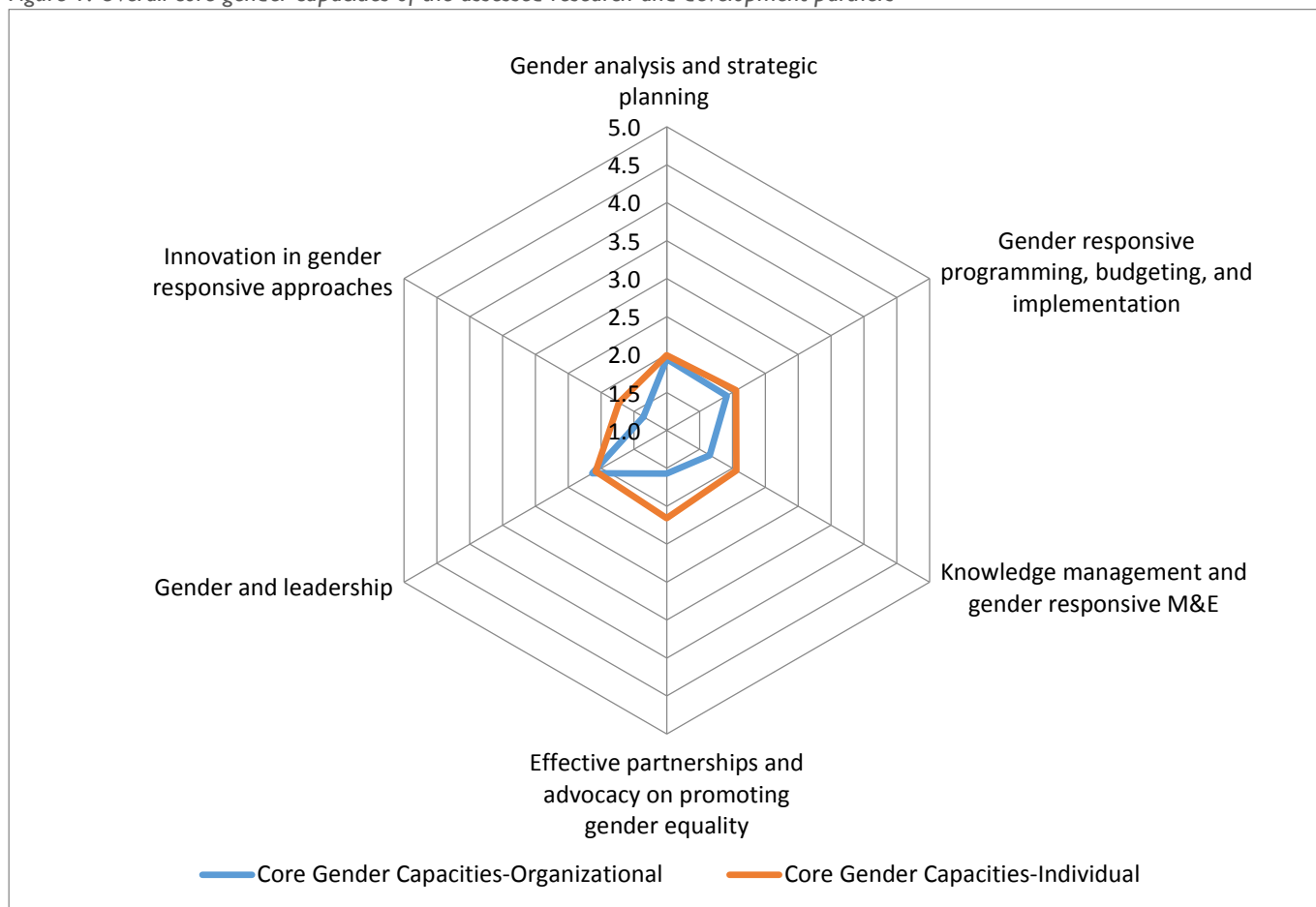
The research was conducted in three selected districts, assessing the organizational and individual level gender capacities of six organizations: Three agricultural research centres in Areka, Bako and Yabello, three district agriculture offices in Doyogena, Horro and Yabello. The assessment of the enabling environment was undertaken by various research and development partners in Addis Ababa.

Findings

The gender capacity assessment tools were found to be robust and user friendly. They facilitated the generation of clear comprehensive—quantitative, qualitative and comparable—data on a wide variety of individual, organizational and environmental capacities. They also helped draw on the contextual specific knowledge of participants in identifying gaps, opportunities, and action priorities in meeting gender challenges. The tools are also powerful for gender awareness raising.

Overall, the core gender capacities of the research and development partners were found to be low. Generally, compared to the national research partners, national development partners seem to show higher scores on all the core gender capacities both at organizational and individual levels, (see Figure 1 below for overall assessment findings). This could possibly be explained by the specific mandates of certain NGOs, collaborating with national development partners, who expose their staff to the importance of integrating gender into their work. Individual capacities tended to be higher than organizational capacities. Again this could be explained by the limited mandate of certain organizations, as opposed to the level of knowledge of specific staff.

Figure 1: Overall core gender capacities of the assessed research and development partners



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