

# Intersectional gender tool focusing on task groups

## Relevance, where it fits in breeding cycle

Sex-disaggregated data collection protocols on variety preferences are problematic as they put upfront sex and gender-differences as an explanatory factor.\* This type of data renders invisible how gender roles are articulated by the intersections of locally defined identities, such as occupational tasks, immigrant or 'local', ethnic/language group, age group and economic status. **So instead of segregating by sex groups this tool proposes an identification of task groups: Who does what?**

This task group approach overcomes the intersectionality of local identities by focusing on who does what along the value-chain and allows for a closer integration with the practice of participatory trials, post-harvest processing, and breeding as these connect to specific tasks.

**People can simultaneously belong to different task groups and the extent to which they belong to one and not another and the extent to which certain tasks are done by women and men are informative about gender roles and norms and current possibilities and developments within farming, processing and selling.**

This makes this tool fit in the 'social targeting and demand analysis' stage but could also be suitable within participatory breeding strategies (generation/identification of new varieties).

**Table 1:** How intersections between tasks and locally defined social groups articulate gender roles and thus restrictions and opportunities for men and women. Task groups are taken as entry point rather than sex.

Task areas	Locally defined social groups						Size/Capacity of enterprise (farm and/or processing and/or selling)
	Sex	Age	Experience	Ethnic/language group	Immigrant or not	.....	
Cultivation	intersections determining roles, restrictions, opportunities						
Processing / preparing	intersections determining roles, restrictions, opportunities						
Selling	intersections determining roles, restrictions, opportunities						

## Description of steps or stages

- Identify how a community defines its different social groups through focus group discussions and discussions with key informants, transit walks and period of immersion in the community.
- Identify who does what in relation to the production, processing and consumption/sale of the variety and its products and identify respondents/participants representing the task or combination of tasks that you are interested in (crop/animal dependent) without using sex as criteria of selection. This should be done by assuring the respondent/participant indeed has detailed knowledge on the tasks that he has indicated to master (probe with jargon, or catch on the job)
- Include participants from each social group and different age group and sex categories if they exist.
- Find out how gender is articulated by combining the participatory activities with gender research on positionality (interviews and observation of the roles taken up by the respondents/participants within the activity)

## Example of use

In Osun state Nigeria we are evaluating improved and farmer varieties with a particular task group that has experience in cultivation as well as processing of cassava to know their variety preferences with regards to food quality. This group is responsible for a major part of *gari* production, a major cassava product in Nigeria. Given that mostly women do the processing we ended up with the identification of mainly women participants. Their husbands were also taken along as they often work together with or share similar work on the farm with their wives as well as to study the intra household power relations and decision making.

The region of study has several immigrant groups that are dependent on locals for access to land. They use similar operations to cultivate, process and sell cassava but the scale of the enterprises differ. Women and men sell fresh cassava while mostly women sell processed cassava. By studying the preferences of each task group within each social group, we insured that all (vulnerable) groups were included in evaluating for preferences. This can inform breeders on how to make a suitable composite of the preferences to inform their breeding practices.



**Fig 2:** Cassava processing in Osun state: sieving, toasting, playing and note taking

## Next steps in developing tool/approach

The tool is currently launched within the cassava breeding unit of IITA, Ibadan Nigeria. First results will inform us in what way the tool will have to be adjusted. The cooperation between social science and gender specialists, food scientist and breeders is crucial to move away from the simplistic upfront disaggregation of data by sex as well as the reliance on mere social science tools.

Trials with farmers and other participatory methods including in-village food science exercises should become tools of action research within a social science investigation for a truly integrated approach to link breeding objectives to gender.

\*Shields, S. A. (2008). Gender: An intersectionality perspective. *Sex roles*, 59(5-6), 301-311.

## Partners

