



Gender Connections: A role for communications, knowledge sharing, and data and information management

About gender in agriculture

Agriculture is under-performing because of women's unequal access to land, fertilizer, technology, extension and credit. At the same time agriculture also faces formidable challenges; from increased food demand to climate change impacts. Closing these gender gaps, therefore, is beneficial for not only women and men but also agriculture.

Understanding the Gender Network

In search of more effective ways to reduce poverty, achieve food security, and manage ecosystems sustainably, agricultural researchers within and beyond CGIAR have formed various networks and communities of practice across research centers and programs. The CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network was created in 2012 to ensure that the system's research programs are gender responsive. Since then, the Network has worked to ensure that the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework 2016-2030 includes gender in its strategic results and expected intermediate development outcomes (IDOs), which explicitly address gender (CGIAR, 2015).

The Network's goal is to inform, guide, and enhance the gender relevance of CGIAR research, leading to gender-responsive or transformative innovations. As of November 2016, the Gender Network had 200 members working on gender within CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs). Of these, approximately 11% are gender experts, 34% other social scientists, and 55% non-social scientists.¹

The Network's core has consisted of a coordination team that included a senior advisor, network coordinator, and three-member knowledge sharing support team (based at CIAT, the International Center for Tropical Agriculture), plus the CRP gender research coordinators, one from each CRP. The bulk of network members has consisted largely of CGIAR researchers who directly or indirectly work on gender, as well as CGIAR partners interested in gender research issues. Some Network members do not conduct gender research specifically but are interested in gender in agriculture (see Figure 1).

Enabling gender connections through the use of an electronic platform

A key purpose of support provided by the Network in communications, knowledge sharing, and data and information management is to promote dynamic scientific consultation and collaboration (based on a strong understanding of the needs of Network members), as well as easy access to information and resources and frequent opportunities for knowledge sharing, both virtually and face to face.

The priorities listed as follows emerged from the Network's 2015 annual meeting.

Network priorities and expected products:

Communications – Increase the visibility of CGIAR gender research among donors, partners, and researchers in close collaboration with CRP communications teams, the gender research coordinators, and other CRP staff members working on gender, as well as with related networks.

- Create a gender website/platform to raise the Network's profile and facilitate access to news, data, information, and working groups.

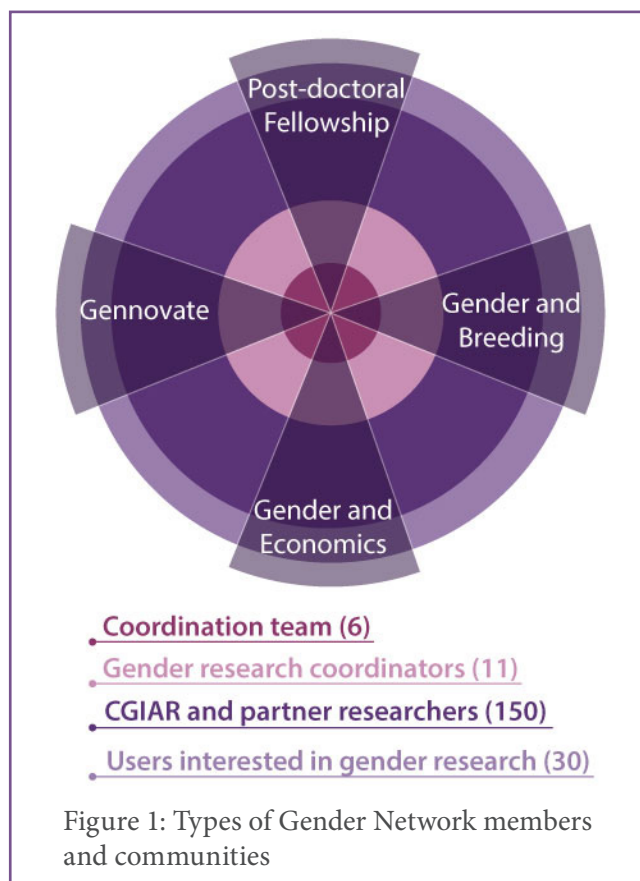


Figure 1: Types of Gender Network members and communities

- Produce a monthly bulletin to communicate about ongoing work and upcoming Network events and other activities, with the aims of raising awareness and building mutual support.
- Develop communication products, campaigns, and messages (e.g., a report series titled Change in the Making and key messages for different audiences on why gender matters in agriculture) in line with a calendar of events throughout the year.

Internal knowledge sharing: Provide effective ways to connect dispersed members working on gender across different programs and regions.

- Establish a “living” list of gender researchers to (1) help involve them in conversations with each other, (2) determine who is working on gender and connect gender specialists, and (3) generate statistics for technical reporting.
- Form virtual subgroups and identify the best communication channels for focused discussions, with the creation of functional virtual work spaces.

- Create and facilitate knowledge sharing opportunities (e.g., webinars and bulletins) to promote mutual learning on specific topics and provide updates on research findings.

Data and information management: Offer tools and systems to Network members which meet their expressed need for strong data and information management in order to enhance collaboration when working across research programs.

- Create a mapped catalogue of CGIAR gender studies to provide an overview of who is working on gender, where, and in which research area

to (1) promote collaboration and improve efficiency, and (2) facilitate technical reporting.

- Build a literature repository to provide centralized access to gender research literature and make gender-related tools and unpublished literature available within and beyond CGIAR.

- Set up a data repository to (1) store and publish gender-related data and collection instruments, as well as related manuals and guides, (2) provide links to external datasets, and (3) facilitate secure data sharing.

Users, products, and achievements

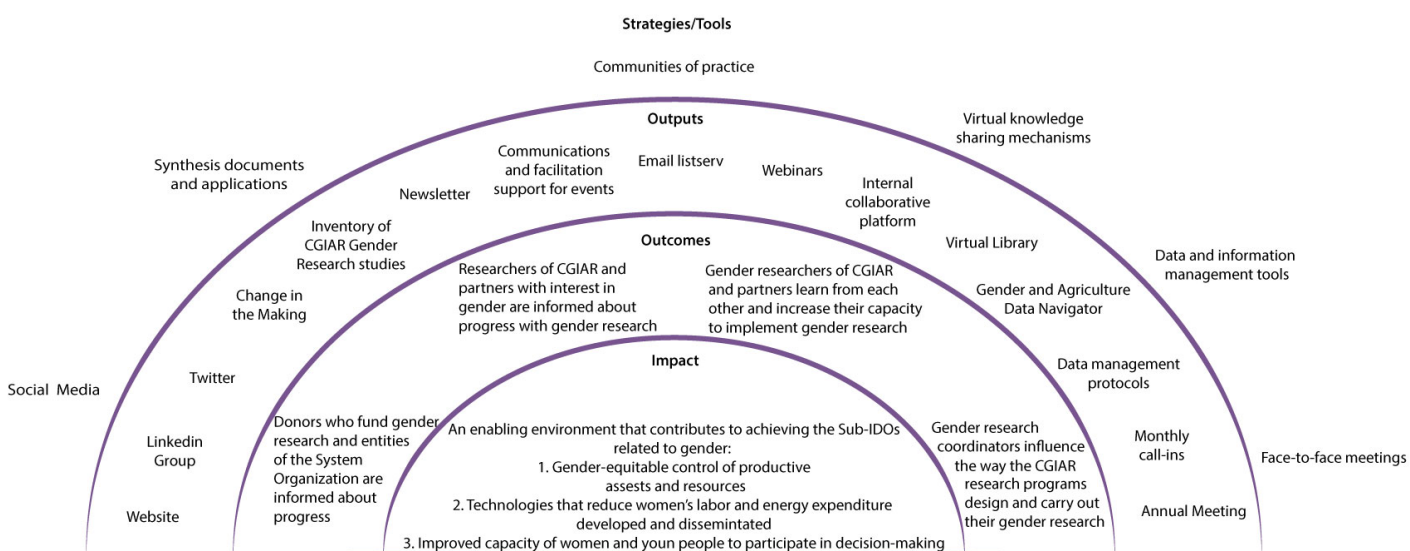


Figure 2: Theory of change for support of communications, knowledge sharing, and data and information management in the CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network

Support for the Gender Network’s communications, knowledge sharing, and data and information management aimed to achieve four major outcomes (see Figure 2) through various products and support functions.

Better informed donors: Donors and other stakeholders in the CGIAR System need easier access to information about CGIAR research related to gender and equity outcomes. This is not easy, since

the information is scattered across multiple CRP platforms. The support team has developed four outputs designed to overcome this barrier: (1) a dedicated gender website, (2) a progress report titled Change in the Making, (3) an inventory of CGIAR gender research, and (4) campaign e-letters that highlight CGIAR gender research activities with a given focus (e.g., equitable access to resources, gender parity, etc.)

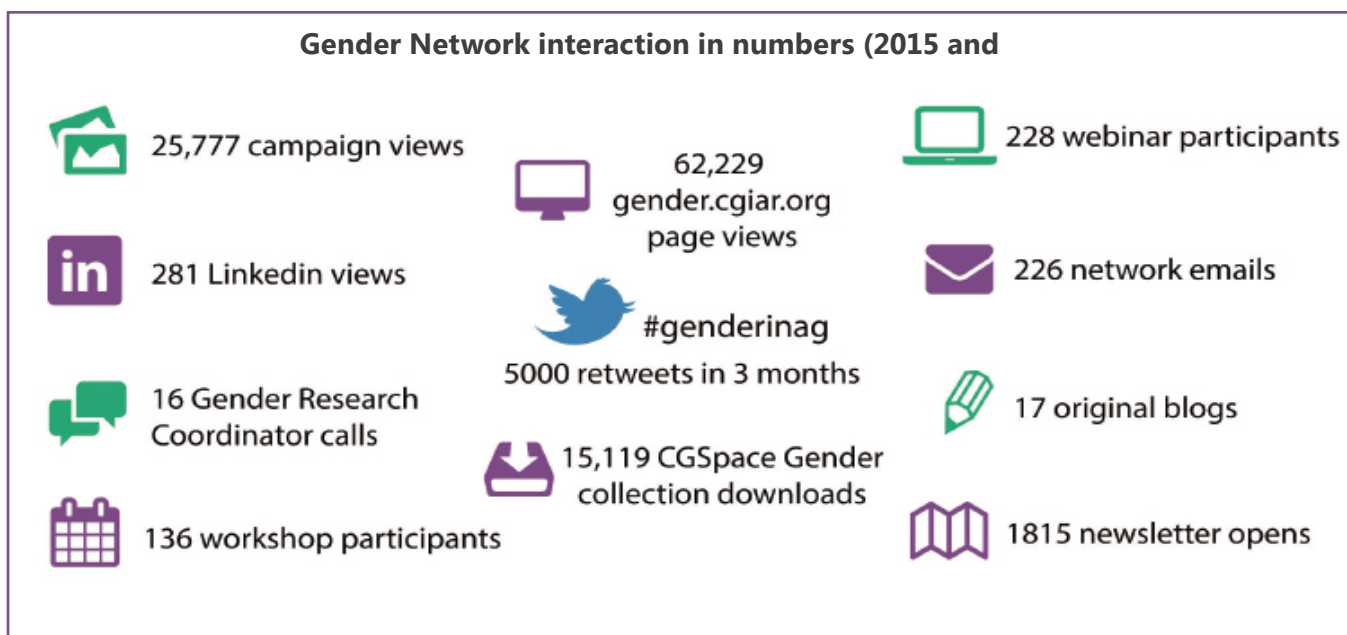


Figure 3: Interaction statistics of the Gender Network from 2015 to 2016, taken from various sources

The website offers gender news of wide interest in CGIAR mainly by aggregating information from multiple sources. For example, in 2016 alone, 200 gender-oriented blogs were linked to and from the CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Website.

The website also serves as an archive for information about Network activities and provides access to the main applications developed for the Network. It provides as well a neutral space to highlight work conducted across the various CRPs and CGIAR Centers by showcasing the relevance of gender-responsive research at the System level.

Change in the Making is a progress report, aimed at giving CGIAR Fund donors and other parties regular updates on advances in research towards the intermediate development outcomes (IDOs) on gender and equity that are indicated in the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework 2016-2030 (CGIAR, 2015).

The first issue of the series, prepared in close consultation with gender researchers from across the CRPs, focused on “gender-equitable control over productive assets and resources,” drawing on published findings from recent work.

A downloadable version, together with an online version, were developed to ensure that this would be a living document that can continue to aggregate resources related to the topic over time.

The inventory of research studies makes it easier to locate recent gender-related CGIAR research. With this tool, the CRPs can more readily provide overviews of current and past gender research, particularly work involving the use of sex-disaggregated data: whether on individual men and women or from households, with female-headed households being differentiated from other types of household structures.

Network coordination works with members to describe their studies in terms of the objectives, site locations, and methods of data collection and to specify how gender is operationalized, with contact data for the principal investigator included.

The inventory, presented as a searchable map, provides input for the “data collection” indicator of the Fund Council Gender Monitoring Framework, which monitors the rate of change in compliance with minimum standards for sex-disaggregated data collection.

Better informed researchers: CGIAR researchers and partners need information about progress and other aspects of gender research. While the outputs described above serve this purpose, the support team has developed additional resources for researchers as well, such as: a webinar series, newsletter, twitter hashtag (which facilitates social media conversations on CGIAR gender research), LinkedIn group, online campaign series, and a virtual library.

The Gender Network has developed a webinar series on issues related to gender and agriculture in collaboration with the CRPs and partners. The series has been designed as a knowledge sharing tool to facilitate exchanges among Network members, promote internal knowledge sharing, and raise awareness of CGIAR gender research.

Six webinars with a total of 228 participants were held on the following topics:

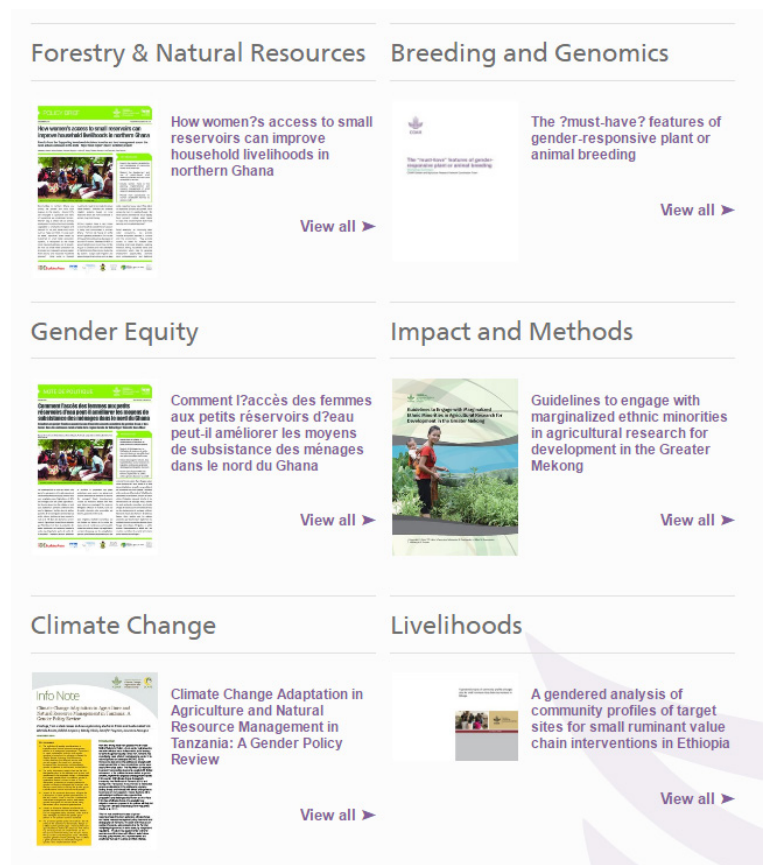
1. Gender considerations in today's post-COP 21 environment: What's missing?
2. Collecting sex-disaggregated agricultural data through surveys
3. Data and information management tools for the CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network
4. Indicators of gendered control over agricultural resources
5. Research Data sharing
6. A different type of gender training

One useful outcome of the webinar series was that partners, such as the Gender in Agriculture Partnership, replicated the process and structure in developing their own webinar series.

The virtual library resides on a platform, titled CGSpace, used by eight CGIAR centers and research programs. The repository makes gender research readily available in a single centralized location and also provides metrics on literature use, such as altmetrics and numbers of views and downloads.



Webinar on Research Data Sharing by Leroy Mwanzia



Part of the virtual library for the CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network, displaying different publications by theme type

Enhanced learning and capacity for Network members: All the tools and resources described above are relevant to all Network members. Other important opportunities for knowledge sharing and learning are provided through thematic working groups or communities of practice:

Gender and breeding: A cross-CRP initiative centered on Gender and Social Targeting for Breeding. The initiative links postdoctoral research projects on issues related to this topic on informing breeding priorities and trait selection with respect to gender differences of economic and social importance. The working group brings together researchers from different disciplinary perspectives to bridge gaps in knowledge about what successful gender-responsive breeding programs should entail.

CGIAR Gender Postdoctoral Fellowship Program: This 2-year program has included 18 fellows since its inception in 2015. It is designed to build greater gender research expertise among young scientists and enable stronger collaboration among CRPs by allowing two or more of them to qualify for a fellow whose work then contributes to cross-program synergies. In addition to complementing and developing their expertise, the young researchers also benefit from mentoring provided by senior gender experts both within and outside CGIAR. Creating a sense of community

among the postdoctoral fellows is a significant feature of the success of this program. The support team has organized and facilitated regular virtual meetings for this community to create an enabling environment that allows fellows to exchange ideas, develop shared priorities and identify opportunities for collaborative initiatives. The team has also helped fellows improve their communication skills by co-creating original blog posts that are featured on the Gender Network's website and disseminated via its social media channels.

Gender and economics: This community incorporates gender into economics research beyond the use of appropriate methods for collecting sex-disaggregated data. It consists of PhD economists in CGIAR who are not specialists in gender research, but who would like to improve their capacity to adequately identify and address key gender-related questions by incorporating gender analysis into economics research (e.g., in adoption studies, value chain analysis, constraints analysis, foresight studies, and impact assessment).

GENNOVATE: This global research initiative conducts comparative case studies across CRPs which address the question of how gender norms and agency influence the adoption by men, women, and youth of innovations in agriculture and natural resource management (NRM).



CGIAR Gender Postdoctoral Fellows at the 2016 Annual Meeting
Credit: CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network

The Gender Network has provided other services as well, such as communications support for events and workshops organized by the Network and its communities, including the design, layout, and dissemination of Network-related publications. Many of those events have led to new initiatives in communications, knowledge sharing, or data and information management. For example, a workshop on research methods for gender research, held at the Network's annual meeting in 2013, resulted in a set of shared conclusions about minimum standards for sex-disaggregated data collection, summarized in a paper prepared by the CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions and Markets (PIM) and disseminated through a webinar presentation and discussion.

In addition, using an e-mail listserv, Network members share information and resources, pose questions, and solicit advice on gender research issues and activities. For example, as a result of the Network's consultation in 2014 on the theory of change for gender outcomes in the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework, members requested a paper reviewing the literature on indicators of empowerment. The resulting literature review was made available as a working paper and shared through a webinar presentation and discussion.

An internal platform enables members to share resources, while facilitating the collaboration of various working groups. In all these ways, the Network promotes cross-CRP collaboration. For example, qualitative researchers involved in gender research identified the opportunity to use a standardized method for conducting comparative case study research. In response, the Network facilitated a study design workshop for the global case study project, GENNOVATE, and also supported development of a literature review paper, preparation of a concept note for resource mobilization, training in the method and in software for data analysis, and the organization of workshops for case study principal investigators to meet and exchange findings. Learning and exchange in these kinds of activities are supported by the communications platform with blogs, webinars, virtual discussion and exchange of library resources.

The support team also works with the CGIAR System Management Office to develop protocols that facilitate data sharing within the Gender Network and among CGIAR researchers generally. A gender data repository set up on Dataverse can be used in conjunction with the protocols for data sharing among Network members or with open-access publishing of gender-related datasets. The Gender and Agriculture Data Navigator – a searchable inventory of household survey questionnaires, which focus on agriculture and food security and were used to collect sex-disaggregated information – shows users how to navigate the matrix of such data collected by PIM and make more detailed searches.

Another collaborative activity with the CGIAR System Management Office involves highlighting CGIAR gender research activities and outcomes via collaborative campaigns and the CGIAR website, thus leveraging its reach for the network. In addition, in order to enhance the capacity of gender research coordinators to influence how CRPs design and conduct their work, the support team organized and facilitated monthly virtual meetings. As described in the next section, these meetings proved highly useful for facilitating joint reflection, particularly during the development of proposals for second-phase CRPs.

Learning from the past and planning for the future

The 15 gender research coordinators across the CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs) faced the dual challenge of having to influence how their programs plan and conduct research, while ensuring that dedicated gender research gets done. The Gender Network coordination team organized several rounds of discussions with these coordinators to share experiences on the following issues:

- Gender outcomes in the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework
- Guidance for second-phase CRP proposals
- Influence of gender research on planning and priority setting in the CRPs
- Main bottlenecks impeding progress in this task
- Good practices that could be adopted more widely
- Gender budgeting guidelines

The discussions took place in virtual meetings, which drew on short analytical essays written by the gender coordinators in preparation for a new phase of the CRPs.

As emphasized in presentations given during these facilitated discussions, the research of the phase-one CRPs registered important progress in tasks such as the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data, stakeholder identification, and acquisition of knowledge about the main issues that women face in the different contexts under study.

The discussion of good practices resulted in the formulation of several recommendations:

- Ensure a mandate for leadership of gender research across projects.
- Encourage pro-active buy-in through leadership support and financial incentives.
- Improve accountability for gender research by leveraging the gender budget.
- Provide a framework to guide integration.
- Develop strong partnerships with external sources of expertise.

For a more comprehensive synthesis of the discussions, see: <https://gender.cgiar.org/integrating-gender-research-areas-challenges-opportunities/>



CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network Annual Meeting



Credit: CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network

The discussions with the network on phase II proposal development and the gender annex were extremely useful and had a big influence on the CCAFS gender proposal.

- Sophia Huyer, Gender research coordinator of the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS)

Progress towards outcomes

The support provided so far in Gender Network communications, knowledge sharing, and data and information management has helped establish a sound basis for effective interaction between Network members. This has also opened up continuous information flows to different user groups within the Network. The support team has tailored the tools and products developed to the expressed needs of Network members, including the coordinators, as confirmed during their latest annual meeting in November 2016.

Future knowledge sharing in the Gender Network

The CGIAR System Office coordinated the Gender Network until December 2016. In the second phase of the CGIAR Research Programs (2017-2022), the CGIAR Collaborative Platform for Gender Research will build on the foundation of the Gender Network. The Platform is housed within the CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions and Markets (PIM) but serves all Centers and Research Programs. The Coordinator and Communications team are based at the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam and will carry forward several Network priorities, including the continued use of the website gender.cgiar.org.

At the 2016 Annual Meeting, the CRP gender research coordinators confirmed the objectives of the new platform. These are to heighten the visibility of gender research in CGIAR; assess priorities for gender research; support knowledge sharing; uphold minimum standards in the collection of sex-disaggregated data; adopt common approaches for monitoring, evaluation, and learning; and build strategic gender partnerships (Orentlicher, 2016). The gender research coordinators also underlined the importance of having facilitated interactions and engagement. They further suggested stronger coordination of gender research across CRPs and in high-priority locations as well as increased support for capacity strengthening.

In addition, the coordinators agreed on the importance of continued knowledge sharing through communities of practice and face-to-face meetings. Other tasks they consider worthwhile are to identify common indicators for monitoring and evaluation, thus facilitating aggregation of gender-related impacts across CGIAR, to prepare a synthesis of collaborative gender research underway in many places across the CRPs, and to formulate projects for presentation at high-profile events.

Assessing the quality of support

The support team at CIAT undertook a mail-out survey to assess the level and quality of support provided for the Gender Network's communications, knowledge sharing, and data and information management, the results of which are briefly summarized as follows:

- Of the 200 members, 36 replied to the survey, with most replies (20) coming from members who joined the Network more than a year ago.
- Thirty-five respondents rated the Network as useful (21) or very useful (14); 11 felt strongly engaged; 19 more or less engaged; and 4 wanted to be more engaged.
- The newsletter, listserv, and website were found to be the most useful communication tools.
- Webinars and annual meetings were considered the most useful knowledge sharing tools.
- A working paper on indicators and the research inventory were the most useful information tools.
- Twenty-five respondents rated the support as very useful (16) or useful (9).

Comments for improvement included increasing the number of webinars, establishing a mentoring process, increasing engagement by all Network members, and providing easier access to research literature.

References

Badstue, L; Kantor P; Prain G; Ashby J; Petesch1 P. 2014. Innovation and Development Through Transformation of Gender Norms in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management. Concept Note.

http://gender.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/CN-Global-Study-GenderNormsAgency_modified-Jan-2015.pdf

CGIAR. 2015. CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework 2016-2030.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10947/3865>

CGIAR. 2016. Gender Monitoring Framework for the CGIAR. Cali, Colombia: CGIAR.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10568/76323>

CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network. 2016. Integrating gender into other research areas: challenges and opportunities. Webpage.

<https://gender.cgiar.org/integrating-gender-research-areas-challenges-opportunities/>

Doss, C., & Kieran, C. (2014, January 01). Standards for Collecting Sex-disaggregated Data for Gender Analysis: A Guide for CGIAR Researchers.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10568/76974>

Orentlicher, N. 2016. Annual Meeting Summary Report. CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network. Cali, Colombia. 40 p.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10568/78057>

Rao, S. 2016. Indicators of gendered control over agricultural resources: A guide for agricultural policy and research. Working Paper No. 1. CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network, CGIAR Consortium Office and International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). Cali, Colombia. 74 p

<http://hdl.handle.net/10568/75779>

Russell N; Karlsson K; Ashby J; Mascarenhas M. 2015. Change in the Making: Progress Reports on CGIAR Gender Research. Issue No. 1 Toward gender-equitable control over productive assets and resources. CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network, CGIAR Consortium Office and International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). Cali, Colombia. 29 p.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10568/68985>

Further Reading

CGIAR Consortium Board. 2011. Consortium Level Gender Strategy. CGIAR Consortium. Agropolis International, Montpellier, France. 12 p.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10568/77559>

CGIAR Consortium Office. 2014. Proposed Actions to speed up Gender Research Mainstreaming in CGIAR. Working Document.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10947/3004>

Referenced Tools

CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Dataverse

<https://gender.cgiar.org/information-resources/dataverse/>

CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network CGSpace Virtual Library Collection

<https://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/66598>

CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network Webinar Series

<https://gender.cgiar.org/category/events/webinars/>

Gender and Agriculture Data Navigator

<https://gender.cgiar.org/gender-data-navigator/>

Gender Research Studies Inventory

<https://gender.cgiar.org/information-resources/data/gender-research-studies/>

About gender in CGIAR

Adopted in 2012, the CGIAR system level gender strategy set the agenda for how all new global CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs) would integrate gender into research activities.

The Gender Research Action Plan (GRAP) was resourced by the CGIAR Fund Council to address the need to enhance capacity development in gender analysis for agriculture in the CRPs.

The CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network was a cross-CGIAR Research Program community of practice for researchers, principally social scientists, whose work focused on or included gender. As of 2017, the Network has evolved into the CGIAR Collaborative Platform for Gender Research hosted by the CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions and Markets (PIM) and coordinated by the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) in Amsterdam.

Contact information

CGIAR System Management Office

1000, Avenue Agropolis
F-34394 Montpellier cedex 5
contact@cgiar.org

About this brief series

This is two of a set of four briefs that provide a final report of the activities, achievements and lessons learned in the Gender Research Action Plan.

These briefs are intended to (1) provide an overview of activities, achievements, lessons learned and opportunities in key areas, (2) provide support and resources for members of the network to more rapidly implement collaborative work in Phase II of the CRPs, and (3) facilitate members' knowledge sharing, given different levels and types of gender expertise, through more effective and accessible mechanisms for cross-learning and good practice exchanges via the Gender Network.

This brief was prepared for the CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network by Simone Staiger-Rivas, Leader of the Data, Information, and Knowledge Group at the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT); Martina Mascarenhas, Coordinator for Communications, Knowledge Sharing, and Data Management Support of the CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network; Leroy Mwanzia, Data and Information Manager at CIAT; and Natalie Orentlicher, CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network Support. The views expressed in this document are solely those of the authors and cannot be taken to reflect the official opinions of the CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network.

We would like to thank all donors who supported the CGIAR Gender Research Action Plan through their contributions to the CGIAR Fund (www.cgiar.org/about-us/governing-2010-june-2016/cgiar-fund/fund-donors-2/).

Citation style: Staiger-Rivas, S; Mascarenhas, M; Mwanzia, L. 2017. Gender Connections: A role for communications, knowledge sharing and data and information management. Gender Research Action Plan Brief No. 2. CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network. Cali, Colombia. # 11

Copyright © April 2017. CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network. Sections of this material may be reproduced for personal and not-for-profit use without the express written permission of, but with acknowledgment to the CGIAR Gender and Agriculture Research Network and related authors.

Cover photo credit: Jane Wairimu (left) of the Kenyan Water Resource Management Authority (WRMA) with colleagues, testing water samples from the river. CIAT is working through the CRP Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE) with partners including WRMA and The Nature Conservancy among others to support farmers along the watershed. Credit: Georgina Smith / CIAT (International Center for Tropical Agriculture).



CGIAR
Science for a food-secure future

We would like to thank all donors who supported the CGIAR Gender Research Action Plan through their contributions to the CGIAR Fund: <http://www.cgiar.org/about-us/our-funders/>

