

# A tool for capturing experiences and change stories of partners in community conversation implementation

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## Introduction

Animal health management is a primary issue in livestock production for smallholder livestock keepers. To design and implement gender-responsive animal health interventions, the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and its research and development partners conducted participatory epidemiology and gender analysis to better understand and prioritize livestock disease constraints, how these affect different households, and men and women's knowledge about disease transmission and control measures. Findings from this study showed knowledge gaps among community members about animal disease transmission and gender issues related to animal diseases and livestock management.

As part of the CGIAR Research Program on Livestock (Livestock CRP) work in Ethiopia, ILRI and the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) research teams, in collaboration with research and development partners, tested a gender transformative community-based learning approach known as 'community conversation' to engage community members and local partners in dialogue and joint actions about gender and livestock health management issues.

Based on the experience of the two organizations in applying community conversation to facilitate change in knowledge, attitudes, and practice (KAP) of households on gender and zoonotic diseases; additional modules, including animal welfare, antimicrobial use and resistance, animal feeds, and collective livestock marketing, have now been developed and tested in some Livestock CRP intervention sites in the country. The community conversation module on gender in livestock is foundational for all other modules. In all the additional community conversation modules, gender has been an integral element, where the research team has tested different approaches, learned valuable lessons as implementation unfolds, and cross-validated findings across sessions and intervention sites. These are being scaled to other Livestock CRP sites in the country through the interventions of research and development partners.

Working with and through research and development partners has been a core design principle and objective of the community conversation approach. The uptake and scaling of the approach requires capacity development support in terms of targeted training and direct participation of partners in the implementation of the approach and following-up on the roll-out by partners through coaching, problem-solving, and lessons learned documentation support.

Throughout the community conversation implementation process on the different modules, the Livestock CRP team has made follow-ups on previous sessions and how partners are building up on their community conversation implementation. The coordinators of the research partners are the core persons to coordinate the follow-up and monitoring of community conversation implementation on various modules by the development partners. The livestock development offices of the respective districts are the lead institutions to coordinate and follow-up on the activities of other development partners to support community members in the implementation of their action plans and also to expand community conversation implementation to other CRP Livestock sites and beyond. The research team seeks to bring together the different partners who have been engaged in the facilitation and monitoring of community conversation sessions on different topics as a 'community of practice' to facilitate implementation integration, partner coordination and peer learning among partners.

# Community conversation implementation follow-up and monitoring tasks of partners

## Before

- Partners received Training of Trainers (ToT) training on the methodology of the community conversation approach.
- They developed action plans and started implementing community conversation on animal welfare, gender and zoonosis, antimicrobial use and resistance (AMR) risks, animal feeds, animal health and collective livestock marketing.
- They also engaged in the facilitation, documentation and monitoring of community conversation.

## Now

- Partners will get additional community conversation module on community-based gastrointestinal (GI) parasite control.
- They will start to monitor and reflect on their community conversation implementation experience and document change stories or outcome cases.
- For this, the Livestock CRP team will provide partners with example change indicators and templates to guide monitoring and documentation of their experiences and lessons in community conversation implementation.
- The research team will also provide partners with virtual coaching support (problem-solving, status updating, supplementary tools, story writing, and social media group for learning and sharing) and will do field monitoring/observation and partner reflection and learning sessions to see how partners have progressed with their community conversation implementation, the lessons they have learned, and the challenges faced.
- Finally, the research team will bring partners together in a reflection, sharing and learning workshop, namely 'knowledge harvest workshop' to give them an opportunity to share their experiences, lessons and change stories with others and also to learn from the others on how they have applied the community conversation approach in their work.
- The output of the reflection and sharing workshop will help generate evidence on the application and scaling of the community conversation approach in national research and development systems.

## Why

- Together with its partners, the Livestock CRP team will generate evidence on the applications or changes due to community conversation implementation at different levels for lessons learning and reporting.
- To draw lessons and scaling considerations for integrating the community conversation approach as a research and practice method in national research and extension systems.
- So that other organizations can use the lessons to apply the community conversation approach as a research, participatory training or planning method.

## Monitoring and documentation checklist for trends of change

The following checklist offers examples of change areas or change indicators to guide partners' reflections and documentation of community conversation implementation experience, lessons

learned or stories. Think in your own way and evaluate how the community conversation approach has influenced the way you think and work with farmers and team members. Try to reflect on and evaluate your community conversation implementation experience at the institutional, team or personal level. Capture any anecdotal stories that exemplify how the community conversation approach has been used in research and extension work.

- Your experience of receiving training to facilitate community conversation – What did you learn from the facilitator training and why was it important for you in your work delivering extension services?
- What have you learned from your experience of facilitating community conversations?
- Has your experience of the community conversation changed the way you or your team intend to deliver extension services in future? If yes, how do you expect your approach to extension will change?
- How can your organization use the community conversation approach to transform the way it delivers extension services? What needs to happen or change to make that possible?
- Inclusion of community conversation implementation in supervisory monitoring checklists of districts.
- Inclusion of community conversation or participatory training applications in performance evaluations of extension staff.
- Inclusion of community conversation approach in a training plan or activity by districts for development agents or expert training.
- Adaptation of the community conversation modules or use of the modules for training or extension purposes.
- Application of the community conversation approach or its principles and methods for research practice or planning or extension.
- Changes in the way training activities or community meetings are conducted differently.
- Changes in the way of working with men and women community members.
- Changes in the way you work with partners.
- Any different way of working with community groups due to the influence of the community conversation approach. For example, involving couples in advisory work during home or farm visits, using single-sex discussion groups, team reflections and sharing after any field work or training activity.
- Any story of influence of the approach at a personal level, for example, the way you engage with your team members, men and women farmers, the way you think about farmers, the way you learn and share information.
- Any observation/trend of change in the number of women reporting animal diseases to local veterinary officers.
- Any observation/trend of change in the number of women attending training/community meetings from the CRP Livestock sites.
- Any observation/anecdotal story where a husband invites his wife to participate in discussions during expert home visits.
- A story of sharing your community conversation experience with team members or other experts – Where and when was it? How did you share information/experience? What was the reaction/impression of the team members or the other experts? Any application by team members/other experts including any new thinking or consideration of different ways of doing due to the influence of the community conversation experience sharing.
- Any observation/story of how the community conversation experience informed new research agenda and the way you work with men and women community members
- Any observation/reflection how the community conversation approach catalysed your work or improved your interaction with farmers or understanding of the issues farmers have.

- Any effort to scale the approach to other communities through training, communication materials, or farmer development groups/extension agents.
- Any observation/feedback on the contribution of the community conversation implementation in facilitating/developing partnering, coordination/integrated implementation, and collaborative learning/delivery capacity of partners.

## Change story template on community conversation implementation

A good story has power to inspire, energize and move people to action.

Good stories can:

- Make people feel to act.
- Help you improve.
- Build a strong learning culture.

Everyone has a story to tell. But finding impactful stories takes work. It requires curiosity and a way of thinking that you must consciously work on.

Story prompts:

- What is unique about your community conversation implementation experience?
- What are you most proud of in your community conversation implementation?
- What are the lessons you have learned in the facilitation of community conversation sessions?

Story element	Description/examples
Contributor(s)	Name of story contributors
Role description	Organization and role
Brief site description	Agroecology, average annual rainfall, farming system
Problem situation	What is the development issue? What knowledge, attitude and practice gaps are identified related to this issue?
Intervention	How is community conversation conducted or adapted to other learning activities?  Community conversation application at the personal, team or community level (e.g., training, material development, team meeting, community meeting).
Observation/reflection/insight	What was your impression/reflection on the application of the approach?
Result and evidence	What has changed or is likely to change?  What were the benefits?
Scalability	Enabling opportunities or team actions that could facilitate integration of the approach as research or intervention practice.

## Interview checklist for assessing gender-responsiveness of community-based breeding cooperatives

- When was the community-based breeding cooperative established?
- What necessitated the establishment of the breeding cooperative? What constraints is the breeding cooperative aiming to address? What are its functions?
- Who were engaged in the establishment of the breeding cooperative?
- Membership – How many households? By gender?
- Management – Are women represented? In what role?
- Capacity of women representatives – confidence, influence, presence, communication, networking, members education, ability to influence decisions and actions, and their voice.
- Has any training and coaching support been given for the breeding cooperative management committee? If yes, in what area and by whom? How has the training been applied and to what effect?
- Gender responsiveness of membership selection criteria – Who developed and applied the selection criteria?
- Has the membership selection criteria been consulted with and agreed on by the community members (men and women)?

### **Views of household members (spouses, unmarried)**

- General information – biodata (name, age, sex, education, household size, livestock ownership) and site description (agroecology, average annual rainfall, farming system etc.)
- What is your impression of the community-based breeding cooperative?
- How do you view the membership of both couples and unmarried household members in the breeding cooperative?
- How has the decision been reached to allocate the sheep/goats in your household when you get registered for the breeding cooperative?
- Who is taking care of the sheep/goats registered by the couples? Who decides on the sale of the animals? Who controls the income from the sale of the animals?
- Do you think it would make any difference if either of the spouses or both of them are members of the breeding cooperative? Why?
- How do you describe the gender dynamics/relationship in your household before and after your membership in the breeding cooperative?
- How has your agency and the gender relations (regarding ownership of livestock and voice) in your household changed due to the couples membership in the breeding cooperative?
  - Consultation and joint decision-making
  - Open discussions between couples and other household members regarding ownership, control over livestock and income from livestock
  - Trust and respect between couples
  - Confidence and ability of women to make proposals/plans for the acquisition or disposal of livestock and the use of income from livestock
  - Women's increased control of income from livestock/ability to make decisions regarding what to do with the income



- Confidence and ability of women to ask their husbands and hold them accountable regarding the amount and use of income from livestock
  - Involvement of children in consultations and decisions regarding ownership and control over of livestock and income from livestock
  - Ability to influence decision-making within household and in community
  - Networking and relational capacity
  - Self-expression and engagement ability
  - Access to information and advice, for example, decisions regarding who participants in meetings or training; support women get from spouses to participate in training or community meetings
  - Market participation
  - Social and economic empowerment, for example, entrepreneurship ability such as membership in village savings groups, leadership/membership in local groups, ownership of mobile phone/radio, etc.
  - Collaborative learning and action in the household
  - Sharing of information within household and beyond
  - Responsibility for care of animals
  - Family education on new dynamics of gender relations.
- Has there been any relational challenges in your household due to your membership in the breeding cooperative, for example, conflicts regarding sale of animals, control of income and plans to use income from animals? If yes, how has it happened and resolved? What have you learned from this challenge?
  - Do you think your work burden has changed due to your membership in the breeding cooperative? If yes, how? What is the implication?
  - How do you see your life in the future? In 10 years, what do you hope to see changed in your business?
  - What support would you need to increase the benefits from your breeding cooperative membership?

## Checklist for monitoring community conversation implementation plans of partners

Capacity development of partners in participatory engagement approaches was a central objective of the community conversation process. From the beginning partners have been engaged in the design, community mobilization, facilitation, documentation, monitoring and follow-up on community action plans. Working with and through partners was helpful in many ways. It has helped contextualize and make discussion points relevant to community members. It has also increased community members' engagement and commitment as local service providers were part of the process and they knew that the activity has owners, which enables continuous learning and application. The community conversation process has also increased interaction and intimacy among community members and service providers. The local service providers found the community conversation approach a good way to engage and get familiarized with or understand the issues of communities in an open and genuine way. It fostered collaborative learning, interaction, and joint actions among community members and local service providers.

On following-up on the community actions from the community conversations, local partners have expressed commitments, as provided below. Monitoring the status of these commitments, the

progresses partners made, and the challenges they faced will help provide problem-solving support and facilitate further uptake of the approach.

#### Livestock development offices

- What has happened after the district-wide sharing of information with representatives from 19 kebeles in Menz Mama district?
- Has there been any follow-up with training of development agents, integration of the community conversation approach in extension? If yes, how was it and to what effect? Any result or evidence?
- Has there been any use of the communities which completed all rounds of community conversation sessions as community trainers or facilitators? If yes, who was contacted and for what? What was the effect or evidence of result?
- In Doyogena, what has happened to your commitment to strengthen and expand community dialogues to include the wider community in the intervention sites? How have you used farmer development groups, development agents, or community animal health assistants as pathways to scaling the community conversation interventions?
- In Doyogena, how has the adult functional education program been used to integrate community conversation? Has there been any progress on your commitment of replicating the community conversation experience in the 17 kebeles in the district?
- In general, has there been any change in the way training or community meetings were conducted due to your insights from the community conversation experience?

#### Women, children and youth affairs offices

- In Doyogena, what has happened to your plan of sensitizing development agents and community leaders in the 14 kebeles in the district? Has there been any follow-up on this? If yes, how has it happened? What has been the effect or evidence of changes? If no, why has this not been done? Will there be any interest or plan to integrate the community conversation approach in the future? If yes, how? How will this be monitored, reported and the lessons used?
- In Menz Mama, what has happened to your commitment of sharing the community conversation lessons through the 651 women development groups established in the district?
- In Menz Gera, what has happened to your commitment of replicating the community conversation experience on gender to other communities using community change agents? Has there been any use of the communities which completed all rounds of community conversation sessions as community trainers or facilitators? If yes, who was contacted and for what? What was the effect or evidence of result?

#### Government communication affairs offices

- Has there been any follow-up on your media work on the community conversation implementation?
- Has there been any effort to follow-up on and monitor community conversation implementation by development partners (notably livestock development offices and women's affairs offices)? If yes, has there been any developing story?

- Has there been any effort to follow-up on and document experiences of community members in the implementation of their action plans? If yes, what have been the stories and how have these been widely shared?

#### Research partners

- What follow-up and monitoring has been made on the community action plans and commitment of development partners to replicate the community conversation experience to other communities and integrate the approach in extension through training, adaptation of the modules or monitoring checklists?

## Way forward

Reflection, sharing and learning workshop with partners to capture experience and generate evidence that further help scale the community conversation approach both in research, development and education.

#### Objectives

- Facilitate reflection, sharing and learning among partners on community conversation implementation experience.
- Generate evidence on the application or outcome of community conversation implementation.

#### Expected outcomes

- Impact or application stories of community conversation implementation captured and documented.
- Opportunities and pathways for integrating the community conversation approach into national research and extension systems documented.

#### Format and content

- Overview presentation to set the scene and create motivation for engagement.
- Story gallery: presentation, feedback, voting.
- Common elements in the stories or experiences.
- Revising stories based on feedback and lessons from others.
- Reflection, feedback and closing.

#### Participants

- Research and development partners who have participated in community conversation methodology training and/or facilitation of community conversation sessions on various livestock topics.
- Partners who have implemented community conversation sessions on various modules.
- Partners who have impact stories to share about application or adaptation of the community conversation process.

#### Venue and time

- ILRI campus, Addis Ababa
- August 2021.

#### Pre-workshop activities

- Rolling out of community conversation implementation action plans.
- Observation and feedback site visits.
- Developing and sending stories.
- Having stories reviewed and commented on.
- Social media group participation.
- Community of practice meetings.