

# FR1.1: Doing GREAT: Genesis and evolution of a gender training program for agricultural researchers

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# Outline

- The gap
- Introduction to GREAT
- GREAT course models
- Design/ methodology
- Lessons learnt

# The gap

Capacity development in gender analysis and integration among researchers is a critical entry point for integration of gender in agricultural research-development. (Njuki 2016; Cole et al. 2014)

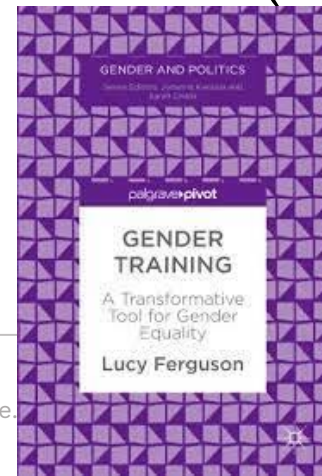
However, key aspects of gender training programs that seed attitudinal shifts and practice change in agricultural research teams are not well understood:

Who should be trained? on what? how?

# Critiques of gender training

- Solely focus on knowledge, skills; don't challenge behaviors and attitudes, and over-simplify concepts of power and social change (Mukhopadhyay and Wong 2007)
- Steer away from complex or academic ideas to avoid being mischaracterized as political (Ferguson 2015)
- Quality standards remain undefined (Bustelo et al.2016).

**“Churning out half-baked gender practitioners”**



# The case of GREAT (2015-2022)

Gender-responsive Researchers Equipped for Agricultural Transformation (GREAT) sought to bridge this gap.

Tested a range of training models

GREAT is a Makerere University – Cornell University - GENDER Platform program:

- Target group: Plant breeding and seed systems programs +++
- Geography: Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia
- Trained 323 participants to date (48% women)
- Tested variable course content and duration (3-14 days)
- Tested models for field application and technical mentorship
- Courses to date: 14 (Africa 12, South Asia 2; Face to face 11; Virtual 3) details in the next slide...

# GREAT Course models, customisation, phasing

Courses completed/in plan	Duration/Phasing	Total Trained	% Women	Lead Partner	Dates
Mainstream Level 1 courses (5)	14 days for both biophysical and social scientists(9 days, fieldwork,5 days. 1 course modified to 9 days (6 days for both, 3 extra days for social scientists)	159	45%	N/A	2016-2021
Tropical Legumes III Project	6 days	18	22%	ICRISAT	Nov-Dec 2018
Burkina Faso Course (INERA, ISRA)	6 days, physical, no fieldwork	31	33%	INERA	Oct 2019
AGGRi - E Africa	6 days, physical, no fieldwork	33	48%	IRRI	Nov 2019
Peanut Innovation Lab	3 days physical	20	55%	Univ. of Georgia	Mar 2020
Innovation Lab for Legume Systems Research	3 days, virtual	08	50%	Michigan State University	Nov 2020
AGGRi-South /East Asia	6 days, virtual	31	35%	IRRI	May 2021
Advanced GREAT Course	9 days (6 days for both biophysical and social scientists, no field work, and 3 extra days for social scientists)	30	52%	N/A	Nov 2021
South Asia Course	11 days (6 days for both biophysical and social scientists, no field work, and 5 extra days for social scientists)	27	29%	GP	Sept 2022



EiA course

[www.greatagriculture.org](http://www.greatagriculture.org)

Nov 2022 6

Other courses: Pro-WEAL II CI webinars, IIN Women, TASAI

# Design/methodology

Reflection and iteration during course design and execution for learning, continuous improvement and evidence generation.

## Evidence generation methodology

- **Course external MLE**
  - Process documentation
  - Post course evaluation
  - Qualitative/ Key Informant Interviews
  - Research cluster tracking (observation, surveys)
  - Outcome surveys
- **Internal MLE**
  - Observation
  - Daily trainer reflection debriefs,
  - Daily participant feedback during the course

# Lessons: Who should be trained to seed attitudinal shifts and practice change?

- The interdisciplinary **teams** of biophysical and social scientists working together on funded research programs
- Research program leaders who have power, voice and can influence research design and budget





# Lessons: What content should be covered? Core course content and learning outcomes

## Content thematic areas

### Both biophysical and social scientists

- Self realization, conceptual clarity and value of GRAR
- Interdisciplinarity
- Gender-responsive social science methods-qualitative, quantitative (Introduction)
- Gender-responsive plant breeding
- Gender-responsive theory of change; monitoring, learning and evaluation



## Learning Outcomes

### Both biophysical and social scientists

- Ability to articulate the concepts and principles of gender-responsive breeding ++
- Entry points for gender integration
- Collect, analyze, interpret and integrate data
- Positive attitude and appreciation of the value of GRAR

### Social Scientists only (Optional for biophys.)

- Conceptualization of gender research for agriculture
- Gender transformative approaches
- Gender-responsive social science methods (Advanced)



### Social scientists

- Design a theory of change and track gender-equitable outcomes
- Conceptualisation, design and implementation of rigorous gender research

# Lessons: What content...? Some valued elements by participants.

## Both biophysical and social scientists appreciate:

- The gender system influences at a personal and other levels; why gender matters in attaining equitable results
- Rigour of qualitative gender research; budget, technical skill and time implications
- Grounding of social scientists in gender responsive social science methods, theory – for enhanced self confidence and value to breeding programs

# Lessons: What content...? Some valued elements by participants.



“

As a gender researcher, this [GREAT] training helped me to reflect on effective ways of fostering and strengthening research collaboration in an institutional set up. This is critical to envisage a change that is transformative, equitable and inclusive

**-Dr Niyati Singaraju**

Associate Scientist, Gender  
IRRI, India

September 17, 2022 during the  
Gender-responsive plant breeding and  
seed systems course

# Transformation? Absolutely!



*“As an entomologist, I would be biased towards: “Control the insects, and the problem is solved,” or, “Bring in new material, and the problem is solved.” But now it's becoming more and more clear that I have to also withdraw from entomology, enter the household, and imagine that I'm making decisions with them, and then try to respond back to my recommendations, and see which ones of them work and which ones of them don't work.”*

**– Bonaventure Aman Omondi, Kenya,  
epidemiologist with Bioversity International**

# Lessons: What content...? Some valued elements by participants.



”

The Gender Responsive Plant Breeding Course has helped me to always use a gender lens in a range of activities including developing product profiles, formulating interventions and writing proposals

”

**Dr Ramakrishnan M. Nair**

GREAT Fellow, Plant breeding Course (Cohort 4)

Regional Director - South and Central Asia;

Global Plant Breeder - Legumes

South Asia/Central Asia World Vegetable Centre

# Lessons: What content...? Some valued elements by participants.



“This [GREAT] course has been two things to me: a shape builder and an ego breaker”

Dr Satheesh Naik SJ,  
Plant breeder, ICAR, Indian Institute of Pulses  
Research. September 17, 2022

# How should gender trainings be packaged to seed attitudinal shifts?

## 1) Trainer team: **Disciplines, gender, ethnicity matters**

Competent multidisciplinary/multiracial team

Plant breeders  
delivering plant  
breeding related  
sessions



# How should gender trainings be packaged to seed attitudinal shifts?

- Gender experts the gender theory/concepts



- A mix of men and women





# Trainer team...some members

Some Africans in SSA  
courses and Asians in S.Asia.



# Trainer team continued...

## Competent multidisciplinary/multiracial trainer team

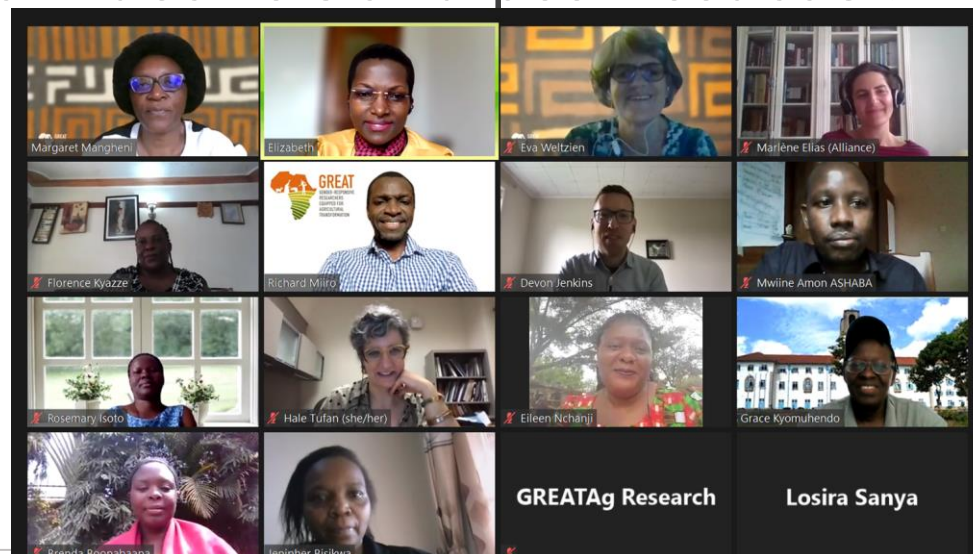
“But also, the fact that most of the trainers were Africans. It means that there is possibility for African-led transformation of our processes, that to me was some pride. I also noticed that trainers who are biophysical scientist could articulate gender issues like that. That means some of us from our entirely biophysical background will (may be) in future be the ones delivering gender training as guest lecturers. Also, the team had both men and women trainers. That means we basically have both men and women to champion gender integration into our development system not for agriculture but other system of livelihoods as well. This demystifies the misconception that gender champions are women”  
(Biophysical scientist, a man).

*Source: Advanced Course MLE report, 2021*

# How should gender trainings be packaged?

## 2. Curriculum design and delivery

- Rigorous quality assurance, iteration of content. Curriculum meetings, quality assurance teams, trainer team debriefs and peer feedback



# How gender trainings can be packaged...

## 3. Technical support for application

- Available funding for immediate application
- Collaborative research between fellows and trainers/senior scientists through the entire research process step by step



# Conclusion

## Selected good practices:

- Robust MLE (external+internal), openness to learning to inform iteration and refinement of the course models
- Training interdisciplinary teams together
- Intentional link of gender analysis to agric research areas e.g breeding, seed systems.
- Theory plus funded field application where Fellows work with more experienced gender researchers
- Content and methods that critique root causes of inequality and provides skills to researchers to act on solutions within their disciplines.

# References

Bustelo, M., Ferguson, L., and Forest, M.(2016). The Politics of Feminist Knowledge Transfer: Gender Training and Gender Expertise. Palgrave Macmillan, London UK. DOI <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-48685-1>

Cole SM., Kantor P., Sarapura S., and Rajaratnam S. (2014) Gender-transformative approaches to address inequalities in food, nutrition and economic outcomes in aquatic agricultural systems, Working Paper AAS-2014-42. Penang, MY: CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems (AAS).

Ferguson, L. (2015). 'This is our gender person', International Feminist Journal of Politics, 17, pp. 380–397.

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Njuki, J. (2016). Practical Notes: Critical elements for integrating gender in agricultural research and development projects and programs. *Journal of Gender, Agriculture and Food Security* Vol 1 (3), pp104-108. DoI 10.19268/JGAFS.132016.6

# References

## GREAT Project reports (Internal)

- Advanced course report, 2021
- Research clusters survey report, 2022
- MLE synthesis report Phase 1, 2021
- South Asia course report, 2022



Thank you!







**GREAT**  
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