



**AICCRA**  
Accelerating the Impact of CGIAR  
Climate Research for Africa



# Women in Agriculture: Accelerating Impact of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa

By Gbegbelegbe Sika and David Chikoye

21<sup>st</sup> December 2022



## IITA WOMEN AND YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE WORKSHOP TWO (2)

### 1. Context

### 2. The Workshop Approach

### 3. Outputs

#### 3.1 Challenges and Solutions

##### 3.1.1 Environmental constraints

##### 3.1.2 Networks

##### 3.1.3 Climate change response

##### 3.1.4 Capacity building (Knowledge and Technical expertise)

##### 3.1.5 Cultural and Social Norms

#### 3.2 Wish-list and solutions

##### 3.2.1 Short Term

##### 3.2.2 Medium Term

##### 3.2.3 Long Term

### 4. Recommendations and Action plan

#### 4.1 Workshop Feedback

#### 4.2. Lessons learned And key findings

#### 4.3 Recommendations and next steps

#### 4.4 How The Rallying Cry could potentially contribute



## IITA WOMEN AND YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE WORKSHOP TWO

### 1. Context

The Rallying Cry and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) continued to collaborate on the workshops that engaged Zambian youth and women in agri-business. In the second series of the workshops (or webinars), the participants were encouraged to further engage with each other, their identified challenges and opportunities, and their wish list items previously identified in the first workshop in September.

The objective of the second workshop was to deep dive into a collaborative approach to identifying potential solutions, consider the role of key ecosystem stakeholders including the banks, policy makers and IITA/AICCRA and prioritise wish list items for potential action. The conclusions reached provide a framing and context for next steps of stakeholder engagement in the third and final workshop for this phase of work.

This report summarises the key findings and outcomes from Workshop Two and concludes with key actions identified and recommendations.

### 2. The Workshop Approach

The workshop opened at 9:00 a.m. and closed at 3:00 p.m. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2022 at the Urban Hotel in Lusaka. The workshop participants were a blend of twenty-three (23) women and youth who came from different towns located in four key provinces. The seating arrangement was designed to encourage open dialogue, maximise participation and nudge people to engage.

The Rallying Cry team opened the workshop with a check-in that enabled the participants to self-assess how empowered they felt in various settings, in comparison to other stakeholders and how important it is to them to be seen, heard and counted. This activity encouraged active participation, provided an opportunity for informal benchmarking, set the tone for the day and also served as a meter to assess key check points throughout the day.

The participants were then divided into smaller working groups of 5-6 participants for the remainder of the day to encourage deeper levels of discussion and to facilitate problem-solving. Group work was presented back to the plenary by self-nominated representatives.

### 3. Outputs

The goal of the second workshop was to build on the insights from the first workshop while doing a deep dive into plausible solutions to address previously identified constraints and desired “wish list” items. Building on the “wish list” items identified in Workshop One, the participants were requested to rank and prioritise these items, i



including mapping potential solutions by stakeholder group. The following sections capture their inputs as below.

### 3.1 Challenges and Solutions

The initial over-arching themes identified in Workshop One were reviewed to remind participants of their outputs: (1) Knowledge, (2) Climate change response (3) Technical expertise, (4) Environmental constraints (5) Cultural and social norms and (6) Networks.

With further discussion, the participants prioritized the original list as follows:

1. Environmental constraints
2. Network
3. Climate change response
4. Capacity Building (two items Knowledge and Technical expertise were combined)
5. Social and cultural norms

#### 3.1.1 Environmental Constraints

**Challenge:** This pillar encompassed external constraints that inhibit business growth including (but not limited to) supply chain issues, route-to-market system flaws, lack of access to markets and access to finance.

**Potential Solution:** Deliberate government and stakeholder assistance in creation linkages between agribusiness producers and trading points from markets to supermarkets and everything in between. This should include altering and/or developing policies that constrain businesses e.g. high tax rate for businesses.

**Stakeholder Roles and Actions Required:** The Policy makers were identified as a central change maker for this work stream. They need to develop and implement deliberate policies that mainstream gender in the agriculture sector. This would include simplifying processes of group (co-operative organisations registration) which is currently online and offline. This can be done by working closely with organisations such as AICCRA that understand the plight of this marginalised demographic and are keen to increase their likelihood of success. The banks also have a role to play and can create more gender inclusive solutions and be more welcoming to women business leaders. Finally, the women understand their role and are keen to continue lobbying and raising awareness.

#### 3.1.2 Networks

**Challenge:** Building on their previous work, Networks was identified as the second most important pillar. Being part of a network bridges gaps for a range of challenges such as information, knowledge, access to finance and/or markets. Etc. The importance of synergy in this pillar resonated even more strongly in the second workshop as the participants had developed relationships with one another and extended



kindness towards each other such as COMACO representatives bringing Gliricidia tree seeds for their fellow participants.

**Potential Solution(s):** The participants generated several solutions that anchored them as the action owners. Among these were the formation of a WhatsApp group, site visits among themselves and being part of a larger network that would foster skills development and business growth.

**Stakeholder Roles and Actions Required:** The women and youth also desired support from AICCRA to aid in the development of mechanisms that would drive these networks such as workshops, events and platforms that would make these networks invaluable. They seek the support of banks in the provision of necessary services and offerings that input value into these networks. These include access to finance, skills development or even business preparedness. They seek support from the policy makers to create the enabling environment for them and the banks to succeed.

### 3.1.3 Climate change response

**Challenge:** The impact of climate change by the agricultural sector is significant as it threatens food security. The participants shared their current realities and the efforts they are taking to mitigate and adapt to these adverse conditions.

**Potential Solution(s):** Some solutions such as the planting of Gliricidia trees for soil and atmospheric rejuvenation and crop diversification were echoed from the prior workshop. Additional solutions included integration or smart agriculture practices and roll-out of green houses for sustainability.

**Stakeholder Roles and Actions Required:** The women and youth with knowledge of these practices can train others especially in smart agriculture techniques. They require support from relevant policy makers to provide a platform and environment for this to be possible. Policy makers also need to integrate sustainability into the core of policies and government and private sector implementation.

Other players such as the banks and AICCRA can provide access to funding that enables enterprises to scale up these solutions and where possible climate smart agriculture models that are replicable at community level.

### 3.1.4 Capacity building

**Challenge:** This unique pillar was a blend of theory (knowledge) and practical (hands-on technical assistance). The need for more knowledge combined with the lack of technical expertise on the ground are a reality for agro-businesses, as discussed at length by the participants.

**Potential Solution(s):** Policy makers need to encourage formulation of policies that deliberately support all stakeholders i.e. The banks, women & youth and support organisations such as AICCRA. They (i.e. the policy makers) could also partner with experts to provide free trainings (such as those offered by Livestock services) and hands-on technical expertise such as fast tracking the integration of extension



n officers in the community. The extension officers require assistance from the government ministries to execute their role as they lack mobility.

**Stakeholder Roles and Actions Required:** Organisations such as AICCRA can bridge this gap by providing subject matter experts or partnering with institutions such as GIZ and Access who have provided special training to women and youth groups in Zambia. The banks can support the policy makers by driving financial literacy extensively among the women and youth and explore avenues of financial inclusion that do not side-line women and youth. This does not necessarily need to be done independently of AICCRA/IITA who can provide a program of trainings and technical expertise for the enterprises. This structured approach provides a network for the women to engage and glean from one another and participate in public speaking opportunities e.g. radio talk shows.

### 3.1.5 Social and Cultural Norms

**Challenge:** The challenge is multi-faceted and unlike the other pillars requires a significant mind-set shift and external stakeholder intervention. Social and cultural barriers are still existing and deeply engrained even though they may appear as objects of the past.

**Potential Solution(s):** The solutions under this pillar identified a need for a collaborative effort among key players. This includes identification of key challenges faced by women and youth (such as Land tenure) and development of platforms that would serve as vehicles for sensitization.

**Stakeholder Roles and Actions Required:** The awareness and barrier breakdown can be aided by AICCRA and other organisations who have the capacity to usher team members into a single forum (or Insaka) to dialogue on solutions to address this challenge. This includes policy makers such as chiefs and headmen buying into the plight of these marginalized individuals and implementing changes in customs that would facilitate the increase of business and individual success.

The traditional leaders supported by policy makers can formulate gender inclusive policies that address the challenges and work closely with banks to implement simpler payment processes, collateral free loans and change the perception of the women's inability to pay loans for this structured approach. A start point for these activities is land tenure, ownership and titling. The women and youth, can drive a advocacy through a range of platforms, including a performing arts group, that enable them to be heard.

### 3.2 Wish-list and solutions

This portion of the workshop recapitulated previous wish-list items, prioritized them in their pillars and drilled down into solutions by key players (stakeholders). The initial short medium and long term pillars were maintained to provide participants with an opportunity for continuity on work done in previous workshops.



### 3.2.1 Short Term

These goals were items that were easier to do and thus considered “low hanging fruit”. This pillar contained two goals which were categorized as follows (in order of importance):

#### (a) Capacity building

This sub-theme was composed a series of business development areas identified previously by the participants. These too, were ranked in order of importance as shown below

1. Climate smart agriculture practises
2. Financial literacy
3. Access to market

The participants highlighted the following:

- Acknowledgement that they have to take an active interest in self-development by participating in online and offline lessons;
- They would need to be part of a network and seek opportunities to improve their businesses; the realization of the need for financial literacy, capacity building and access to funding for business growth.

Such capacity building opportunities could be provided by the banks and AICCRA in various formats including trainings, workshops, and informal cascades. The policy makers can additionally support these collaborations and the women & youth by working closely with these partners and co-creating solutions that address identified gaps.

(b) Access to governmental solutions: The participants expressed an appreciation towards the solutions the current government had rolled out such as Zambia Farmers Input Support Program (FISP), Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and loans being provided by Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC). The CDF was considered as the most important proceeded by CEEC and finally FISP. However, they highlighted the complexity of the application process and at times the level of ambiguity and the lack of knowledge with regards to these facilities. As women and youth they are committed to applying for these financials solutions; however policy makers should build capacity and educate them on the process. In addition, they should partner with banks to ease account opening procedures to ensure simplified issuance of funds.

AICCRA/IITA and other such organisations should aid women and youth in their journey

### 3.2.2 Medium Term

The medium-term wish-list items activities equally underwent ranking and top three fundamental actions were selected and analyzed. These include:

#### (a) Equitable access to finance



The solution for this action is deeply rooted in literacy and actual financing of the enterprise. This will enable vision implementation and ascertainment of profitability. Entities like AICCRA and banks can provide access to an assortment of financing instruments and the necessary technical assistance to aid these business owners to grow and scale their businesses. It is imperative that they build relevant skills for optimized management. They need the support of government policy makers to create this inclusive environment.

**(b) Capacity development:**

This theme has been consistent through the workshops and navigated through constraints, wishes and next steps. The first step is buy-in and commitment by the women and youth to address this need. The policy makers need to follow through on extension services, associated logistics and climate change policies being implemented. The supporting enterprises can provide more training opportunities and networking events while the banks need to delve into financial solutions that aid purchase of equipment.

**(c) Platform creation:**

This wish-list item addresses the knowledge gap, access to finance and network requirement identified by the women. This platform will save them time spent on research and enable structured peer interactions.

### **3.2.3 Long Term**

The participants agreed that in order of priorities, the market linkages were the most critical. This was followed closely behind by policy development and finally cooperative growth and development.

**(a) Market linkages:**

The themes encompassed the development of sustainable and supportive market systems and linkages for produce. The various stakeholders including the women and youth each have a role to play. The first step is for the women and youth to produce the various items and seek channels to sell this produce such as aggregation, out-grower models and even trading amongst themselves. They still require support in financing from banks and policy makers and where necessary capacity building and market information from AICCRA/IITA.

**(b) Policy development and revision:**

The policy makers form a core piece of creating environment that enables business tenacity and success. By creating interventions around land titling, taxes, unfair market trading terms and factors affecting SMEs as a matter of urgency. They also have a responsibility to monitor and evaluate the implementation of these endeavors. In addition, they have to create an enabling environment for banks to sustainably provide access to finance and be willing work with organizations such as AICCRA or and lobby groups who equally are working on improving these policies.





The women and youth are most impacted and this awareness requires them to create a structured approach as they lobby for transformation.

(c) Cooperative creation and growth:

The role of cooperatives was discussed and the realization for mind-set shift is necessary to show that cooperatives should not be formed to receive Farmer Input Support Program (FISP) and Constituency Development Fund (CDF) grants. There is a general perception of under-performance and politicized registration. In addition, members lack training, interest and general business acumen. These cooperatives can solve value chain challenges such as hatcheries, solar cold rooms, etc. This can be solved through intervention by government institutions in simplifying and optimizing the registration. They also have an obligation to educate the groups during their formation and aid them through the leadership selection process. The members (i.e. the women and youth) have the responsibility of understanding that these organized groups are businesses and should commit to them.

All stakeholders have a responsibility to provide access to finance, capacity building and aiding these enterprises to deliver on set goals during formation.

#### 4. Recommendations and Action plan

This section collates the insights, verbal and written feedback forms. They have been refined into insights translated into actionable information (lessons learned and recommendations).

##### 4.1 Workshop Feedback

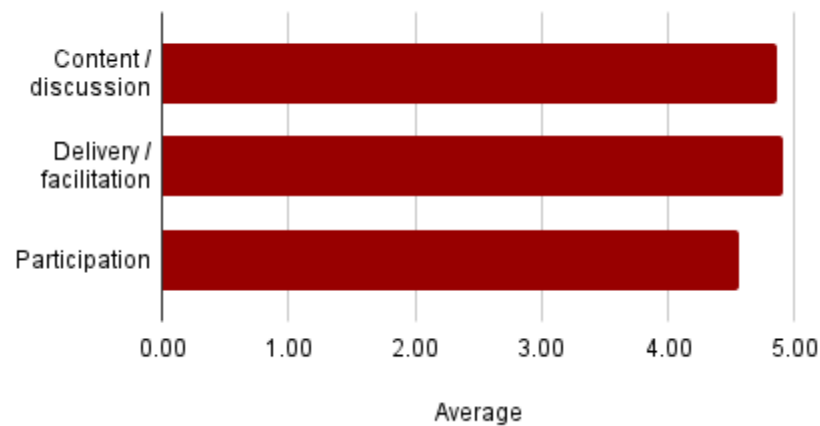
As per the first workshop, the participants provided feedback on three key elements:

1. Content / Discussion
2. Delivery/ Facilitation
3. Participation

These three items were selected on the basis of creating a replicable model.



## Evaluation Results



The ratings of each component were calculated out of five (5) with 1 being poor and five (5) being excellent. The delivery/facilitation element was the highest with a rating of 4.91. It was followed closely behind by Content/discussion with 4.87 and participation at 4.57 out of 5. The participation aspect was measured in the second workshop to determine the level of interaction which was raised as a concern in the previous workshop. These factors show that overall the workshop was successful. The responses provided by the participants have been integrated below and form a significant part of next steps and recommendations.

### 4.2. Lessons learned and Key Findings

The second workshop revealed some new things and confirmed previous findings:

- Re-affirmed that business owners understood their enterprises, their shortcomings and were able to articulate their needs.
- Showcased the value of networking as the women and youth shared industry knowledge, closed deals and shared Gliricidia seeds.
- The role of the various stakeholders in the solutions identified was clear and a roadmap can be developed
- Re-affirmed the need for technical and financial support so that the women and youth led businesses can engage in sustainable impact management;
- The feedback both verbally and in writing showed resonating themes around the need capacity building and access to finance;
- The access to finance consistently was a secondary desire or requirement with the primary need being knowledge and understanding. This validated previous findings that showed the desire for capacity building and training outweighed requests for financing; and
- Demonstrated nature-based solutions that the participating SMEs were already implementing and could be replicated by other farmers.



The deep dive provided profound insights such as the hunger and desire that women and youth possess for knowledge and growth. It also introduced a new aspect i.e. climate smart agriculture, which is not a new practice to the participants but needs to be further discussed and recognised.

The interactive approach provides an opportunity for attendees to participate in a smaller setting or group set up. It is an inclusive way to ensure all inputs are captured and every individual feels part of the co-creation process. The presentation by team leaders also provides a sense of ownership. This is anchored to an environment that is safe and fosters comradery.

The AICCRA/IITA project is engaging the target audience on multiple fronts. It became apparent that these women and youth are unaware of the different offerings available – by AICCRA/IITA or otherwise – including grant programs and technical assistance. There is most certainly an opportunity in this space for IITA to educate members from the assorted bundles on their key strengths and leverage the partnership networks and the draft programs of work going forward.

#### 4.3 Recommendations and next steps

We provide our recommendations and next steps below for the short, medium and longer term.

##### 4.3.1 Short Term

These recommendations are quick wins that ideally would be implemented promptly to ensure that attendees feel heard and believe change is on the horizon. A further step has been taken to bucket these wish list items into themes

##### Capacity Building

- Develop enterprise capacity through workshop and/or trainings calendar
- Workshops and/or trainings should be a minimum of one day, and should follow a similar engaging and inclusive format with deliberate effort by facilitator to engage all participants;
- Where possible workshops and trainings should be facilitated by a localized resource for increased relatability;

##### Business strengthening

- Development of business plans and comprehensive business goal
- Development of SMART goals and action plan for Wishlist items with mechanisms to monitor these activities;

##### Network development

- Development of a platform where women and youth led business can engage and have access to peers, knowledge and finance.



- A network map should be executed to identify a pool of skilled entrepreneurs or individuals from various industries to provide training for the women and youth e.g. value addition, human resource recruitment, and technical expertise.
- Development of an ecosystem map showing financiers and enterprise support organisations and their offerings.

#### AICCRA input

- Education of members and participants on IITA/AICCRA offerings
- IITA/AICCRA to engage subject matter experts to address needs identified
- Commence stakeholder engagement to embark on policy reform journey

#### 4.3.2 Medium-Term

These activities require buy-in from external stakeholders and creation of partnerships.

#### Access to finance

- Partner or collaborate with a team for the development and implementation of optimized equitable access to capital models for women owned and led agribusinesses;
- IITA to share grant opportunities post capacity building activities
- Engage stakeholders on the development of solutions for distribution of Constituency development fund.

#### Nature based solutions

- Roll-out nature conservation projects such tree planting of Gliricidia, or Moringa that are good for the soil and can be used as animal fodder;
- Implement smart agriculture models

#### Capacity building (practical)

- Provide Technical assistance to SMEs in-situ through easy and practical approaches via government field resource officers and experts; and
- Avail extension officers with an understanding of the community and agricultural practises that can work

#### 4.3.3 Long Term

These long term activities should form part of the strategy to ensure implementation.

- Roll-out affordable and sustainable irrigation solutions for farmers to ensure full year production and address impact of drought;
- Engage stakeholders for policy interventions and reforms around land titling, taxes, unfair market trading terms and factors affecting SMEs.

Overall these recommendations and the solutions identified for the challenges and wish list items were co-created by the participants. This confirms the fact that they are i



needed capable of generating their own answers to the challenges they face and these actionable as they are tailored in lights in their realities.

These solutions will be consolidated and utilized as a framework for the third and final workshop of Phase 1 where the participants will engage a range of invited stakeholders. These explications should be at the centre of the dialogue and addressed respectfully. Post interaction, it cannot be over emphasized that a structured program of work or action plan be implemented and monitored (coupled with course correction) for optimized results.

#### 4.3.4 Action Plan

This portion of the report highlights a top level action plan that was curated for immediate implementation. These are low hanging and were expressly stated as areas that the participants wanted to be addressed. Among these are:

- Mapping of different types of Enterprise Support Organisations and programs
- Mapping of financial service providers, their benefits and their offerings
- Access to pre-finance, finance and post support
- Development of a program of work which focuses on strategy development, business enrichment and an action plan.
- IITA/AICCRA to provide participants with more information about the organisations, their benefits, offerings and programs of work that may be relevant for business growth

These five actions points do entail that other recommendations are irrelevant. They re-inforce the urgency of delivery of short-term actions on key business fundamentals or aids.

#### 4.4. How The Rallying Cry could potentially contribute

The Rallying Cry team could potentially support the development of some of the recommendations from both workshops, for example:

##### Ecosystem mapping

- The Rallying Cry could help develop a map of financial service providers and local Enterprise Support Organisations.

##### Capacity Building

- The Rallying Cry could help prepare a training proposal (and calendar) for the women and youth covering both soft and hard skills requested by the women;
- Develop content and facilitate trainings and workshops;
- Aid in the development of, and propose a mechanism for, follow-up based on the outcomes of workshop trainings;
- Support further research and development of gender-smart, climate responsive tools for agribusiness.
- Development of a program of work that focuses on developing enterprise resilience and crafting the relevant tools to address identified gaps



- Provide technical assistance specifically on the gender-climate nexus

#### Access to Finance

- Develop and implement optimized equitable access to capital models for gender-smart and climate responsive agribusinesses.

#### Network

- Aid in the development and management of a single platform that will serve as a single source of information, training and opportunity dissemination.

The take-outs from the workshop show that more needs to be done with regards to training, access to finance and capacity building. The Rallying Cry able to aid AICCRA and the women and youth as they embark on this journey. A partnership between AICCRA and The Rallying Cry would help create the right service solution delivery with solutions that are in tune with the concerns of the women and youth in Zambia and enable the development of a solution template that can be replicated in other countries and customised to suit the local agribusinesses for each market.



### Acknowledgemnt

The Accelerating Impact of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA) project is supported by a grant from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank. IDA helps the world's poorest countries by providing grants and low to zero-interest loans for projects and programs that boost economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve poor people's lives. IDA is one of the largest sources of assistance for the world's 76 poorest countries, 39 of which are in Africa. Annual IDA commitments have averaged about \$21 billion over circa 2017–2020, with approximately 61 percent going to Africa.