

Gender Report Fair Planet Project

Adopting gender approaches to increase productivity and income in vegetable farming

Likoko E.



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Despite the important role women play in agricultural production their role is often under-recognized, and their optimal contribution to productivity and profits remains untapped. Women face greater constraints than men due to their differentiated gender specific needs and barriers to their agribusiness participation. Addressing the prevalent gender gaps, and context specific barriers in the agricultural sector is paramount as it tackles the loss in productivity and livelihood opportunities that women continue to experience; and promotes increase in agribusiness income. To increase meaningful participation, productivity, income and empowerment of women smallholder farmers in vegetable farming, adopting a gender aware intervention strategy that mainstreams women's involvement and benefits in the project activities is key. Intervention strategies need to have mechanisms for understanding existing gender dynamics in target communities and their effect on productivity and income outcomes; and the adapt gender sensitive interventions that develop the capacity of women, increase their participation in a way that promotes gender equality in agribusiness productivity outcomes.

Keywords: Gender aware approaches, women participation, smallholder farmer productivity

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Photo cover: Fair Planet

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

DAs	Development Agents
FHHs	Female Headed Households
GGDI	Global Gender Development Index
MHHs	Male Headed Households
WCDI	Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen University & Research
WUR	Wageningen University & Research

Summary

In Ethiopia, women make up 49.74% of the estimated population and 25 percent of all Ethiopian households are female headed yet Ethiopia is ranked 174th out of 185 countries on the Global Gender Development Index (GGDI). In rural areas, 57 percent of all working women and 88 percent of men (aged 15-49) are engaged in small holder agricultural occupations. Women's tasks include land preparation, weeding, trellising, harvesting, threshing and storing. Despite the important role women play in agricultural production their role is often under-recognized, and their optimal contribution to productivity and profits remains untapped. Women face greater constraints than men due to their differentiated gender specific needs and barriers in their agribusiness participation. Gender inequalities and barriers for women in Ethiopia's agribusiness sector includes limited participation by women in key agribusiness market activities, limited participation in capacity building initiatives and a general lack of access to agricultural inputs that affect their overall output. Addressing gender specific barriers in the agricultural sector is paramount as it tackles the subsequent loss in productivity and promotes increase in income from agriculture.

The Fair Planet project aimed to increase smallholder farmers' productivity and income from vegetable farming through access to affordable high quality vegetable seeds, improved and sustainable farming practices and better links to markets. To support this goal, the gender component of the project adapted a gender aware intervention strategy that sought to mainstream gender sensitivity in the project activities in order to increase the meaningful participation of women farmers. In this approach, it was paramount to first understand the gender related barriers in the project context; and then adapt interventions that sought to address these barriers, while ensuring that the proposed interventions do not cause a negative effect to the economic and sociocultural fabric of the target communities.

The main conclusion therefore is that effective interventions that seek to increase smallholder farmers' productivity and income and agricultural development need to look beyond technical interventions and consider existing gender dynamics in the farm and households, because gender dynamics have a significant impact on productivity outcomes. Intervention strategies need to understand existing gender practices in target communities and their effect on intended production and income outcomes in order to adapt and modify strategies to recognize and incorporate the gender sensitive approaches. Gender aware intervention programs recognizes the centrality of gender roles, barriers and opportunities food production, processing and marketing strategies; and focus on sustainable and meaning participation outcomes that promote gender equality in agribusiness productivity.

1 Introduction: The gender agenda

1.1 Background

In Ethiopia, women's roles within food systems vary significantly, often disproportionately, touching all aspects of the value chain – spanning from agricultural production, to food processing and storage, retail, and consumption (Thomas Woldu Assefa, Fanaye Tadesse, 2018). Women make up 49.74 percent of the estimated population of 86,707,000. Rural Ethiopian populations, are predominately dependent on agriculture and subsistence farming with 57 percent of all working women and 88 percent of men (aged 15-49) are engaged in agricultural occupations. (Bachewe *et al.*, 2017)(Christiaensen, 2017). According to the World Bank, women contribute 40-60 percent of the labour in agricultural production in Ethiopia; women play an important role in income generation, as well as household tasks. Within the agriculture sector, the labour burden on women significantly exceeds that of men. These heavy workloads, combined with their role as primary caretakers, undermines their productive capacity and exacerbates challenges in meeting their agricultural production and income generation goals. (Bekana, 2020; UNDP, 2020). Women's role in agricultural production and sustaining the food and nutrition security of their families is increasingly being recognised by governments and development partners. However, this contribution is rarely recognized at household level or in national statistics, and women are generally disadvantaged in their access to productive resources, credit, extension services, technologies and agricultural inputs. Besides, women tend to have less participation in decision-making both at household as at community level, as compared to their male counterparts (FAO, 2011; HLPE, 2017). This disparity affects agricultural productivity as well as the household food security at large.

Besides, women tend to have less participation in decision-making both at household as at community level, as compared to their male counterparts ((De Pinto *et al.*, 2019; Hegena *et al.*, 2020). This disparity affects the production as well as the household food security at large. There are also marked large discrepancies between male and female farmers in the adoption and use of inputs, such as good quality seeds due to differences in access to financing; with men (who own the land) having more access to financing options. Men are more involved in the production and or sales of cash crops than women; they decide which crops to grow and market, and control the income derived from sales. This leads to overall reduced productivity and profit among women in agriculture. Due to cultural influences women less access to education in general which affects their skills and ability to get optimal output from their farming initiatives. Overall, women also have limited access to agricultural extension mechanisms such as field days, demonstrations and trainings as they face time constraints for participation in education and training. Smallholder women farmers in Ethiopia also produce and sell vegetables from home gardens or forest products and the income obtained is mainly used on meeting household nutrition and income needs (FAO *et al.*, 2020). A joint study by the World Bank, FAO and International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) confirmed that if women worldwide had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30% and raise total agricultural output by 2.5-4% (FAO, 2011, 2016; Food and Agriculture Organization, 2011). Tackling the barriers that hold back agricultural production and productivity of smallholder female farmers in Ethiopia is paramount in promoting their increased production and income growth.

1.2 An overview of gender aware approach

The gender gap in agriculture is a pattern, documented worldwide, in which women in agriculture have less access to productive resources, financial capital and to advisory services compared to men (FAO, 2015). While gender shapes both men's and women's lives, the tendency is for women to have a more disadvantaged position in comparison to men. This can have significant implications for the adoption and sustainability of agribusiness practices. **Gender awareness** refers to the ability to view agricultural intervention from the perspective of gender roles and understand how this affects women's needs in comparison to the needs of men. There is a risk that, if this gender gap is not taken into consideration, the

development of site-specific agricultural solution options could reinforce existing inequalities. The particular needs, priorities, and realities of men and women need to be recognized and adequately addressed in the design and application of agricultural solution so that both men and women can equally benefit (FAO *et al.*, 2015, 2020; Slavchevska, 2016). Gender awareness leads to the development of gender sensitive interventions. An initiative is **gender sensitive** when it considers the impact of policies, projects and programmes on men, women, boys and girls and trying to mitigate the negative consequences thereof. **A gender aware approach** ensures that the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of agricultural intervention initiatives includes gender-sensitive indicators which help track progress on closing the gender gap in agriculture while introducing interventions to develop capacity and enhance women participation in a way that promotes gender equality in the intervention initiatives (Nelson *et al.*, 2016).

In order to support women's and men's equal uptake of and benefit in site-specific agricultural intervention practices, gender analysis as well as equal participation and engagement of women and men are the key actions to be taken into consideration at the outset of any intervention (Christiaensen, 2017). Beyond the intervention activities, the institutions involved in agricultural development need to partner with women's community-based organizations to go beyond a focus on agricultural productivity and support income generation, access to savings and loans, nutrition and health services. Continuous knowledge development is needed on how gender roles shape women's and men's lives as they engage in agriculture and agribusiness (Nelson *et al.*, 2016).

1.3 Gender focus in the project

The overall project focus was on the sustainable provision of high-quality vegetable seed, training, extension and market linkages. The gender component of the project sought to adopt a gender sensitive approach that mainstreams gender concerns in the project activities and monitoring and evaluation system. The approach concentrated on increasing the meaningful participation of women farmers (this includes Female Headed Households as well as wives of Male Headed Households) in the project activities and tracking these increments via the monitoring and evaluation plan. For this to happen, there was a need to increase the capacity of the project staff to understand and facilitate gender program implementation in their daily work activities. The intended outcomes were increased productivity and strengthening of market linkages for women smallholder farmers and their institutions (women groups and farmers organisations). The gender strategy was developed to respond to the gender gaps among men and women in the project areas. These gaps include limited representation of women in training programs even though they are largely involved in many of the farming and post-harvesting activities related to vegetables; and multiple responsibilities in both household and farm related chores that affects their productivity.

An important principle in the gender component of this project is the "do-no harm principle", that guided the project gender strategy to ensure that its project activities do not trigger negative ripple effects for women and their communities. For instance, it was important to assess the extent to which the involvement of women farmers in the production and marketing of vegetable production, resulted in meaningful income benefits for them from the produce, as opposed to promoting activities and agricultural solutions that increase their already heavy home and farm workload, without the women experiencing any benefits. Development approaches aiming to deliver interventions need to consider women smallholder farmer's ability to navigate the many evolving factors that influence their power to make, and act on, and decide on their agribusiness activities and the income it generates. Gender aware approaches reveal these linkages and avoids the unintended negative consequences of gender blind intervention delivery. These approaches are dynamic and better aligned to the knowledge and actions of people that these plans seek to benefit. (Druzca *et al.*, 2017a). Gender aware approaches identify entry-points to solutions that seek to address the full complexity the skewed productivity between men and women. Approaches that flow from this starting point build resilience to unanticipated shocks and trade-offs that undermine pathways to improved income and productivity among women smallholder farmers (Fischer *et al.*, 2017). This includes power interplays across domains and between individuals, households and their societies. Gender transformative approaches are collaborative, and evolving frameworks with gender mainstreaming strategies across the program lifecycle (O'Leary, 2020).

Hence, this report highlights the main gender related needs, interventions and impact in the vegetable seed sector and consolidates them to provide insights for stakeholders to understand possible intervention approaches to employ. (Halliday *et al.*, 2020) that sought to identify and focuses on the social-cultural experiences of the different genders as they engage in agribusiness. The gender strategy was designed to build an understanding of existing gender bottlenecks, and develop an appropriate process, which is effective for behavioural change, to support women, as well as men to participate meaningfully in agribusiness(Drucza *et al.*, 2017b; CIMMYT, 2018; Pouw, 2018).

In the upcoming sections, the report consolidates the gender strategies used in the project, and summarises an analysis of the gaps, experiences and possible intervention strategies that stakeholders can use to adopt gender aware project design and implementation. Specifically, this report highlights the gender indicators and gender specific barriers for women and possible interventions for their desired income and productivity outcomes. It explores some of the possible strategies for increasing women's participation and capacity development for stakeholders in the agribusiness environment to support gender mainstreaming. Lastly, it identifies multi-disciplinary linkages that could facilitate gender sensitive approaches as a key intervention strategy for long term agribusiness sustainability.

2 Gender intervention activities

In this section, we look at the gender intervention activities used to adopt and incorporate a gender awareness lens into the project. The gender component in the Fair planet project adopted six activities conducted in the project duration to incorporate gender awareness in the project. These are: (1) Gender analysis; (2) Mainstreaming gender concerns in training methods and materials; (3) Gender training of trainers; (4) Backstopping visits and ad-hoc advice to project staff; (5) Scaling successful experiences to (local) partners; and (6) Reporting, monitoring and evaluation. The activities took place at different phases of the project. Below is a detailed overview of the different strategies as employed in the project implementation in Ethiopia.

2.1 Gender analysis

Conducting a gender analysis was an important initial activity for this project as it showed how gender relations affect agricultural challenges, outcomes and their possible solutions. With this information, it was possible to begin to clarify the project gender goals and design the project plans in a manner that is sensitive to and reflects the different experiences and needs of women and men (Druza *et al.*, 2017a; De Pinto *et al.*, 2019). **Gender analysis** refers to the assessment of how and why gender differences and inequalities exist with the goal of identifying opportunities to narrow these gender gaps/inequalities to enhance equalities between men and women (De Roo, N., Tariku *et al.*, 2016).

To this end, a gender analysis was conducted at the start of the project and during the project lifespan sought to clarify the gender concerns, and the extent to which the project can support their being addressed in the subsequent activities. The identified socio-economic and cultural barriers included socio-economic and cultural variations in the identified Butajira, Dire Dawa and Haramaya agro-ecological zones and communities. This diversity was also reflected in the context specific gender relations. Social mobility also greatly differs from region to region, which influences the opportunities that women in these communities must produce and market their produce. Hence, knowing the actual and site-specific gender roles, gender constraints and opportunities in vegetable production and marketing for the project sites, gave an understanding of the existing gender realities in these communities; and helped in formulating interventions that correspond to the women's and men's needs, and address their constraints in vegetable production and marketing. The gender analysis was designed and supervised by Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (WCIDI) and executed by in-country project team. Other similar gender inquiries were done during the project to understand issues such as gender dynamics in vegetable production, marketing, and the potential of (informal and formal) women groups in overcoming gender constraints in vegetable seed agribusiness.

Gender analysis done in the project sites provided an understanding of the gender-based task division related to production and marketing of tomatoes, onions and peppers in the Ethiopian context. These insights were valuable in identification of opportunities and challenges of Female Headed Households and wives of male-headed households in production and marketing of produce, and for strategy formulation. The gender analysis exercise in Dire Dawa, Haramaya and Butajira was also an opportunity for the project team to increase their awareness about the experiences of women (as that of men) in vegetable production and marketing, including their important role productivity and income generation potential.

2.2 Mainstreaming gender concerns in training methods and materials

Gender Mainstreaming is a globally recognized strategy for promoting gender equality and equity. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself but a means to ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to development intervention activities such as policy development, research, advocacy, capacity development, resource allocation, planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects (Venkatramanan *et al.*, 2020). Mainstreaming can be defined as reorganizing, improving, developing and evaluating agricultural intervention processes to incorporate a gender perspective in all interventions, at all levels and at all stages. Gender mainstreaming is both a political and technical process. In gender mainstreaming strategy, focusing only on women is not going to resolve the larger issues of gender inequality; rather, there is need for engagement with broader processes and stakeholders of change, particularly at the level of policies, formal and informal institutions, and cultural institutions that govern the behaviour of men and women (Barik, 2021).

In this project, based on the findings of the initial gender analysis of the Ethiopian context, specific recommendations were subsequently provided to incorporate gender awareness into the project intervention such as the capacity development, identifying gender aware methods and ensuring that intervention materials and activities such as organising field days and demo-plots set up are gender sensitive. This meant promoting activities that allowed women to participate meaningfully, benefit from project activities and receive tools that support their empowerment. This included equipping their community and relevant stakeholders with tools that incorporate them in ensuring the interventions are gender sensitive and can sustainably be adopted by women and their communities. This also meant that produce marketing strategies for female headed households were different for marketing strategies for male headed households. These interventions were based on the insights from the research conducted and the response to other project activities; and in close collaboration with the capacity building staff. An important element of gender mainstreaming capacity building was for the project implementing team to be equipped, to continuously implement the gender mainstreaming activities and approaches in their project work.

A gender awareness raising workshop was carried out to equip the project staff and project partners involved in the project implementation process. This gave the project staff a unified understanding of what gender mainstreaming entailed in the project, while providing a forum for their input on possibilities, options, limitations and boundaries that the gender strategy needed to consider. Their contextual input was useful in developing a strategy for the increased participation and benefits for women in the project. Some of the strategies identified for intervention included gender aware training methods, extension support, and potential women friendly marketing strategies.

Lastly, gender inclusion material was developed to give new volunteers and project partners background information on gender & agriculture in Ethiopia and an overview of the gender approach used in the project. This included practical tips and tricks to ensure attention to gender is prioritised. The material included "facilitated discussion" guidelines on how to incorporate and support a gender sensitive approach when working in Ethiopia. Training sessions were proposed to be organised in a time and location appropriate for women so that women participation in capacity building activities can be increased.

2.3 Gender training of trainers

The overall purpose of the gender training of trainers in the project was to enhance gender-aware planning and implementation skills of project team and stakeholders, so that they can be equipped to effectively play their part in implementing gender-sensitive development initiatives, as well as mainstreaming gender in order to achieve the intended productivity outcomes (AWARD *et al.*, 2020). Training of the staff and volunteers in the project was key for capacity building. The goal was to enhance the conceptual understanding of gender in the context of rural development, agriculture and agri-business in Ethiopia. In addition, the trainings provided an opportunity for the staff and other stakeholders such as the extension workers, to understand gender specific barriers and be equipped with appropriate strategies to increase the

meaningful participation of women in project activities such as trainings, and for intervention adjustments needed in the project activities. Equipping project staff with strategies and tools to understand and better deal with gender concerns in their daily activities provided an opportunity for women to thrive as they participate in the project activities. Capacity development in the form of training supported the team to conduct gender value chain analysis; household activity analysis; gender disaggregated data collection and monitoring. As the need arose, follow-up tools, material and training were developed to tackle upcoming challenges faced by project staff in relation to gender mainstreaming.

A training on gender equality in the agricultural sector in Ethiopia was held for stakeholders at the project locations to shed light on the gender gaps in the agricultural sector in Ethiopia and the importance of incorporating gender sensitive approaches for the success of the development projects. It was an opportunity to include women during trainings and field days, and to encourage the project team and stakeholders to intentionally reach and include women by identifying barriers that exclude them from capacity building opportunities.

2.4 Backstopping visits and ad-hoc advice to project staff

To support and promote quality implementation of the gender activities in the field, backstopping visits to each project site were carried out to provide contextual understanding, discuss challenges faced and provide hands-on advice based on existing and emerging gender related needs, strategies, interventions and questions. The visits were adaptive and aligned with other project activities; and served to reinforce and support the gender mainstreaming process by providing contextual reference to the gender advisory team. Joining the staff in the field proved effective for continuous project evaluation, deliberating on field realities around the gender barriers and strategies, and their implications on effective and contextually relevant strategies that increase meaningful participation of women. This was through strategies such as deliberations on the possibilities of improved collaboration between Agricultural Extension and Health Extension workers; differentiation of needs and activities for Female Headed Households (FHH), wives in Male Headed Households (MHH), and Women Groups (WG); targeting women in agricultural intervention work; assessing whether women can benefit from participating in the project; and, partnering with other organisations to address gender transformative issues that could not be addressed by this project.

These backstopping visits were planned in close collaboration with the capacity building staff during the project. Some of the issues raised were addressed through capacity building and discussion workshops for staff of the various project sites. This was supplemented by hands-on advice provided on need basis by e-mail or online calls throughout the project implementation phase. To increase efficiency (time and costs), as much as possible trips were combined with already planned project activities in Ethiopia. Changes in project staffing during the project lifespan also meant that these visits focused on acquainting the new staff with gender aspects of the project work.

In Butajira, visits to the field sites entailed discussions regarding the gender analysis process in the field. Based on the discussions and field-testing, the data collection tools were developed and revised to incorporate the feedback from the data collection team. In addition, it was concluded that the gender analysis data from the respective respondents needed to be captured as qualitative data in order to understand the reasons “why” the existing gender related challenges were experienced and what would be realistic solutions for respondents in this context. It was also important to identify how gender concerns were considered in activity planning, implementation and evaluation. Input from the female DAs was particularly important in identifying the possible entry-points for working with women in Butajira considering their cultural realities and roles.

In Dire Dawa and Haramaya, gender concerns were considered in planning, implementation and evaluation of activities. Discussions on existing gender bottlenecks and possible intervention strategies involved both male and female farmers; male involvement was key for the community awareness and support in identifying and addressing gender related challenges. Community stakeholders such as female DAs, University of Haramaya (Research and Extension department), Bureau of Agriculture Mining, Water and Energy (Planning Head, Gender focal person), Bureau of Women’s and Children Affairs participated in the

identification of possible entry points in working with women at project and site level. The field visits included visits to demonstration sites where improved farming practices were carried out as part of the hands-on project learning; here recommendations for gender mainstreaming in the different activities was also discussed.

These support visits were also an opportunity to reinforce the project need for sex disaggregated data, gender aware logistics planning and gender reporting of the different initiatives. This included discussions on strategies for deliberately involving women in trainings together with the men.

2.5 Scaling successful experiences to (local) partners

Scaling up refers to taking successful projects, programs, or policies and expanding, adapting, and sustaining them in different ways over time for greater development impact. A decision to scale up an intervention requires a reflection on its optimal size (national, provincial, or only local level?), diseconomies of scale, quality/scale trade-offs, and institutional/organizational constraints might limit the scaling-up possibilities (Hartmann *et al.*, 2007; Jenkins *et al.*, 2010; Development initiatives, 2020).

As the gender interventions were implemented in this project, the staff and local partners such as the extension workers and other partnering organizations were encouraged to share lessons learned with other relevant stakeholders such as extension workers and DAs in the same context. The goal of this was to support other communities to understand and overcome existing gender related challenges that sabotage productivity and income generation. As a result, meetings with Extension and Women's Affairs Office (and the Food Security/Gender Desk) at woreda level were organised in all sites to discuss the issue of how to increase women's participation in field days, trainings, and targeting women as beneficiaries of the Fair Planet on-farm trainings. Working with the Women's Affairs office at woreda level, and the Gender Focal Person at the Food Security Desk at woreda level, was also identified as important to find women who could be future project beneficiaries.

Project training sessions on agronomy needed to incorporate content that women explicitly asked for, such as financial literacy, marketing, business management, accessing credit by linking to local organisations and stakeholders with expertise in these areas. The project strategy incorporated existing women's groups as a significant entry point for supporting sustained access to vegetable seeds. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the final scaling up activities could not be implemented due to travel and movement restrictions that were experienced during the pandemic. Even though these challenges hindered the field activities geared towards dissemination of the project insights, conclusions and recommendations in the final two years of project implementation, specific lessons and their possible applications in development projects are captured in chapters three and four of this report. Based on the project experiences, important insights and recommendations towards the scaling up process have been made to Fair Planet, partners and other development partners. This includes lessons learned in gender mainstreaming in partnership with local stakeholders (See recommendations in Chapter 4 of this report). This can be used in relevant local, regional and national meetings and knowledge platforms, as well as be shared with other relevant stakeholders to support scaling of the successful approaches to other similar areas.

2.6 Reporting, monitoring and evaluation

Gender intervention monitoring and evaluation was a continuing activity in the project lifespan that aimed to provide an ongoing indication of progress towards the achievement of gender awareness in the project (Johnson *et al.*, 2018). Regular reporting of the gender intervention activities and their contribution to the overall gender awareness outcome provided essential information used as a basis for gender programming decision-making (Johnson *et al.*, 2018; Ruel *et al.*, 2018). The gender reports captured the activities carried out and their relevance and contribution to project outcomes. From the project onset, the gender barriers, the corresponding intervention approaches, and their effect on the women participating in project interventions activities were monitored and captured in the annual reports. Particularly, with a focus

on how these activities benefit, and empower women (and men) by promoting activities that allow them to participate meaningfully. Develop a monitoring and evaluation system to identify the leverage points for increasing women's participation, direct benefits and empowering tools was necessary. It was also important to monitor how project activities were carried out with gender sensitivity by tracking qualitative measures such as adjustments in training times and locations that were key in bringing about sustainable participation by women in the gender intervention activities. Efforts to increase overall women participation as direct beneficiaries by the end of the project were identified, monitored and reported on over the project lifespan. A project End-line survey was carried out to assess the improvement in the equitable participation of women in farming and implementation of improved farming practices for women. This survey examined the cultural norms and their gender implications in the household, farming and income generation for women.

In executing the gender intervention activities, the project staff was involved in the gender analysis, adapting the training material and methods to include contextual gender aspects, collecting data for the gender aspects of M&E, and to contributing to the reports. Gender specific indicators such as participation, voice and empowerment of women and other stakeholders were identified and used for project monitoring and evaluation to assess progress on gender mainstreaming. Based on these indicators and collected data, detailed annual plans and reports were made on progress, challenges and achievements with respect to these activities. Chapter 3 of this report captures the progress, challenges and insights from the project regarding gender.

In conclusion, these gender intervention project activities supported the project in understanding the actual site-specific gender roles, constraints and opportunities in vegetable production and marketing for women; and identifying and executing interventions that promote gender sensitive intervention in the project areas. In the next section of this report (Chapter 3) we focus on the highlights of understanding these gender realities in their agribusiness experience and seek to draw conclusions on what this means for overall productivity and marketing for income generation.

3 Insights on participation of female smallholder farmers in implementing improved agricultural practices

The gender intervention activities in chapter two were geared towards understanding and addressing the socioeconomic and cultural systems that reinforce differentiated needs and challenges of male and female smallholder farmers. This was evidenced by their limited access to high quality seeds, and other production and agribusiness inputs that was affecting their productivity and income levels. Improving effective and equitable participation of women smallholder farmers in agricultural practices was one of the targets of this project, with the ultimate objective of attaining food security for farmers' families through increased participation and benefits for smallholder (female) farmers. These capacity building and access enhancing activities aimed to provide men and women with access to affordable high-quality seeds, and a subsequent increase in agricultural productivity. The process of conducting project activities with a gender sensitive lens revealed the following insights on gender aware project implementation.

Lack of a gender mainstreaming strategy is an important deficit that curtails optimisation of agricultural intervention for two reasons. First and foremost, tackling gender discrimination in agricultural practice demands the creation and implementation of measures that tackle head on the situation-specific institutional arrangements that systemically discriminate against women. Such arrangements, such as unequal access to land, machinery and sources of information, act to weaken the performance of women farmers and demonstrably damage the national performance of those countries where female participation in agriculture is high. Secondly, when gender mainstreaming is not a priority for an intervention programme, it was not possible to intentionally identify and involve women in agricultural production and productivity programmes for better agricultural outcomes (Sida, 2010).

Women's participation in training activities can be encouraged and supported through gender sensitive project design. Women participants in training initiatives was limited at the start of the project even though both women and men were equally involved in many of the farming and post-harvesting activities related to vegetables; with more women engaged in the actual vegetable production. Agriculture Experts and DAs from all regions testify that the participation of women in improved agriculture practices or farming according to projects such as Fair Planet is very limited.

Women participation in training activities was low due to 1) women not being invited to meetings because they are not household heads; 2) women are unable to join trainings due to inappropriate selection of days, times and locations that conflict with their other household and care responsibilities; 3) cultural limitations that inhibit women movement from the household. While a gender blind intervention approach will fail to take these three factors into account; a gender sensitive approach in this case meant that interventions needed to address these three constraints as a starting point to promoting increased participation by women (Quisembing *et al.*, 2014). Recognition of the differentiated challenges that hinder the meaningful participation of women is key. Intentional targeting of women for subsequent trainings meant that 32% of the interviewed women participated in a training offered by the project, while a little over half of the interviewed women participated in a capacity building field day; a significant improvement from the 3% participation recorded on the first year of the program.

Negative perceptions on gender intervention by the community can be a risk factor for project uptake. An initial concern was the misconception in the project implementation context that gender aware interventions are "anti-men". This is due to a perception that women are the only ones who will benefit from a more equal society or that gender related interventions would be disadvantageous for men. From the project inception and design, it was important to elaborate that gender approaches are about making sure men and women can benefit from projects such as Fair Planet that seek to support the productivity of their agribusiness efforts. Without this clarification, it would have been challenging to do the actual project implementation work. This clarification was important at the project start and required time investment for

the project volunteers and community to reflect on the gender aware approach in relation to community culture and social relations. There was need for specific gender focal point persons to continually support the gender goals in the project process. Platforms for reflection on gender gaps and how to address them were necessary. Reflecting on the existing position of women and men in food production, processing and marketing allowed participants and community members to analyze how the households can improve women's ability to strengthen food production and household income. For the project to succeed and do no harm to women's situation in this case, it was important to consider the implications of the gender strategy. The goal of these gender reflections was to create a common understanding that tackling the barriers that hold back agricultural production and productivity of smallholder female farmers could both enhance gender equality and broader economic growth from the increased productivity.

Similarly, the project staff and volunteers needed to be aware of the gender situation in Ethiopia and be prepared with hands-on tools and advice on how to contribute to continuous dialogue and reflection towards positive change. Increasing the capacity of the project staff to deal with gender issues in their daily job, as well as mainstreaming gender concerns in the training methods and materials used in the project was key in supporting the community to understand what gender interventions mean.

The End-line survey found an improvement in women's decision-making in the household. However, there was no observable improvement in the equitable participation of women in farming and implementation of improved farming practices among women. The survey revealed that elements of women's decision-making power in the household seem to have improved compared to the baseline survey. These elements include decisions around food consumption and home improvement, but no major improvement was seen in their ability to participate in decisions related to farming or agribusiness income. The project End-line survey did not find an improvement in the equitable participation of women in farming or implementation of improved farming practices for women. This is inherently because cultural norms and their ensuing gender expectations and role act as constraints to such advancement. Local norms and culture act as major barriers to women participation. Being a gender aware project. It did not fully address local gender roles and limitations and their underlying persuasions in the project duration. This project's gender mainstreaming process was to promote a deliberative space where a wide variety of actors, men and women, households and local government and non- governmental organisations can assess and address local gender inequality patterns in agricultural processes that affect overall production. Disruptions due the pandemic and political upheaval affected a great part of the implementation and affecting the momentum generated towards gender awareness. This raises the question of effective gender awareness strategies in contexts where development initiatives are embedded in largely unchallenged cultural systems that can be generally inflexible or unwilling to improve gender equality in their contexts. For the proposed solutions to continuously challenge gender inhibiting social structures, there is need for long term gender transformative, multi-faceted and continuous awareness creation in local fora such as media and education programmes, and effective capacity building and leadership approaches that can effectively shift gender norms.

Heavy agricultural and household workload for women, and limited access to production inputs and agricultural support systems was a major challenge at various intervention stages. Culturally, there was and still is a widespread acceptance of women's gender roles that have them working for longer hours combining farm work and household work. These limitations that women face have an overall negative effect on food production and marketing outcomes. In order to attain the project goal of increased productivity, addressing the reality of women's resource and participation limitations are key. Women identified a need for time management so that they can combine vegetable production with managing their other household responsibilities. A combined strategy for time management tools while addressing the access limitations presented by their gender roles was needed in this project. Due to the limited space for changing the project scope, it was not possible to include gender responsive strategies such as introducing labour saving technologies and intra-household approaches. Multi-sided capacity building workshops and dialogues incorporating the women, men, their households and other relevant stakeholders was used to brainstorm on possible adjustments that needed to be made to ease women's labour burden. Cultural limitations on access to instruments of production such as capital and land, as well as inhibitions on movement that affected women's ability to attend farmer training sessions added another layer of barriers for women. Examining the project agricultural interventions while considering contextual cultural gender

dynamics helped to identify linkages with these existing opportunities for providing gender awareness support in already existing platforms (formal and informal) to make visible the nature of task division in the household, and its effects on agricultural initiatives.

Aggregation through women's groups encourages participation of women, access to capacity development, and increases their ability to access capital. Local women's groups are culturally acceptable ways for women to regularly meet and to organize themselves formally and informally for different agendas. These women groups are a natural avenue for women to have direct contact with existing stakeholders and institutions such as governance institutions to access different capacity development options and inputs such as capital or affordable quality seeds. For the project, the women were able to access and see the productivity potential of good quality seeds, for long term access, alternative mechanisms such as aggregation of women may be used to enable their access to vegetable seed through economies of scale.

Extension support goes beyond provision of technical services and takes place in complex environments structured by gender relations and affects the effectiveness of extension support. Conceptualizing extension as a technical, value-free activity is seriously mistaken. When extension services work with the whole household, rather than with individuals in that household, the whole farm is strengthened as a productive enterprise. This is because the systemic interdependence of women and men's work is explicitly recognized and strengthened. Given that many community-level capacity building processes are male dominated, women who play a key role in agriculture are often missing in these fora.

Recognizing and alleviating constraints to learning for women (and men), such as cultural inhibitions and lack of time, help women to develop their abilities to support farming activities. Innovative strategies are therefore needed such as gender sensitization of development project and extension staff so that they are equipped not only to understand, but challenge and work around gender inequalities. This includes collection of sex-disaggregated data and contextually relevant arguments for gender mainstreaming. In addition, the ability of the programmes to involve women in marketing chains is generally weak, though most programmes have well-developed marketing components. This can be attributed to a lack of understanding on how to recognize and alleviate the gender-specific constraints facing women attempting to access markets.

In conclusion, enabling women and girls to achieve their full potential is essential for building productive, resilient and sustainable agricultural systems that smallholder farmer contexts need to flourish; this includes promoting access to resources and the right to participate meaningfully. The gender aware approach explores intersections of women (and men) with agricultural productivity outcomes across the value chain.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

In this project, meaningful and more equitable participation of women smallholder farmers in agricultural practices with the ultimate objective of attaining food security through increased productivity and income entailed an increase in benefits to smallholder (women) farmers through a combination of capacity building and access to affordable high-quality seeds and other inputs. The benefits were to be seen through increased agricultural productivity and increased participation of women farmers as direct beneficiaries of the project capacity building component and conducting project activities with a gender sensitive lens. Even though there was a significant improvement in the access to training by women in the project locations during the project duration, in Ethiopia as a whole, women participation in agribusiness capacity development is still limited. Identifying and addressing the gender differentiated barriers to their meaningful participation is key to increasing their access to capacity development opportunities and tool that enhance their agricultural productivity. This section highlights the conclusions from the projects gender awareness initiative, and proposed recommendations for agribusiness intervention programs to consider from this.

4.1 Conclusions

- Lack of a gender mainstreaming in agricultural development strategies curtails optimisation of agricultural intervention due to the lack of measures that tackle head on the situation-specific institutional arrangements that systemically discriminate against women and weaken the performance of women farmers particularly in contexts where female participation in agriculture is high; subsequently it is also not possible to intentionally identify and involve women in agricultural production and productivity programmes for better agricultural outcomes.
- Agribusiness capacity building initiatives that do not recognize the differentiated ability to participate by men and women run the risk of perpetual low female farmer participation; and women continue to miss out on capacity building initiatives and the subsequent increased productivity benefits. Men and women have different agribusiness experiences in vegetable production and marketing hence intervention strategies cannot assume that one of the two would know best for both in household ran farms.
- Intervention initiatives should consider the time dynamics and constraints that women face due to cultural gender roles in order to design strategies that are realistic for women to participate and benefit from. For example, farmer trainings and seminars should be organised in a time and location appropriate for women so that they can join. (The best way to find out what is convenient, is to ask women themselves).
- Despite the shared goals of increased income, increased food and nutrition security, the scope of agricultural development initiatives is often not fully aligned with women and community priority needs. For instance, in this project respondents needed additional capacity building in business, marketing and financial literacy. Anticipating and taking stock of these fundamental needs is key in identifying relevant stakeholders to support gaps between contextual capacity building needs and project scope.
- Local and national government partners are a valuable resource for project implementation work. Gender awareness creation among government officials, who do not use gender sensitive approaches, is crucial to highlight the importance of targeting and supporting women.
- Access to seeds, farm inputs, reliable irrigation and labour is vital for vegetable production yet women, especially in FHHs struggle to access labour and irrigation resources for their farms. Meaningful project participation, and benefits takes this into account as interventions are designed to increase also women's productivity. Women's focused access to seeds and other inputs within the household farms need to be promoted, to empower women to access seeds, grow vegetables, and market the surpluses.
- Gender sensitive agricultural approaches for empowering women smallholder farmers in Ethiopia need to identify and overcome existing gender barriers such as women's excessive workload; and support the women's ability to increase agricultural production in the home gardens and farms to enhance household productivity and income; and access to resources that will allow her to strengthen production , access to agribusiness marketing opportunities (Alkire *et al.*, 2013; Galiè *et al.*, 2019).

- Druza et al.(2017b) report that there is frustration among stakeholders in the way gender intervention has been implemented with bare minimum involvement of women that has little or no meaningful impact, hence there is a continuous need for dialogue to identify better ways of mainstreaming gender while reducing the negative perceptions that gender approaches evoke in the community at large. Women participation needs to be meaningful and go beyond mere meeting attendance. Trainings need to be designed in a way that there is meaningful exchange of knowledge that responds to the needs of the farmers. In extension and capacity building sessions, women’s opinion, views, needs should be captured, highlighted and inculcated into the intervention programs.
- The End-line survey found that 32% of the interviewed women participated in a training offered by the project, while a little over half of the interviewed women participated in a capacity building field day; a significant improvement from the 3% participation recorded on the first year of the program.
- Lastly, the End-line survey revealed that elements of women’s decision-making power in the household seem to have improved compared to the baseline survey, but it did not find a significant change during the period of Fair Planet’s intervention on the attitude and practice of women’s participation in improved farming in all regions.

The following are recommendations that can be incorporated into project programming to promote the adoption and implementation of a gender sensitive approach.

4.2 Recommendations for future gender programming

Future interventions of Fair Planet need to explore more steps to strengthen the participation of women in farming and use of improved farming practices, to mainstream gender into agricultural intervention initiatives. The following gender-sensitive approaches need to be considered and embedded into future projects’ design:

Recommendations for Fair Planet and agricultural development programmes:

- Identification of existing gender dynamics and barriers needs to be a priority at the start of agricultural intervention initiatives to provide an overview of what challenges needs to be addressed by the proposed solutions. Before development programs are curated, there is a need for understanding also the needs of women and best solutions for the context.
- The understanding that “gender transformative approaches are key in enhancing overall productivity” needs to be understood not only by women, but by men and all other stakeholders involved in designing and implementing development initiatives. This means that gender related initiatives need to go beyond targeting women only and seek to incorporate the whole community for more sustainable outcomes.
- Linkages with local authorities that have already established gender programs is key for pooling together resources with other stakeholders for a common productivity outcome among farmers. The women can be identified through discussions with the Extension Offices of the local Bureaus of Agriculture, who identify the participating farmers. The Extension Offices and Women’s Office can help to develop strategies to remove the barriers for women to access labour, irrigation and credit. Systemic gender mainstreaming is key for sustainable adoption of gender inclusive intervention programs. This includes working with local government representatives such as DAs to make them aware about the importance of engaging women as key stakeholders in capacity building forums.
- Equipping intervention workers with professional competence to incorporate and implement gender perspectives in interventions; including guidelines, manuals and management instructions that guide the work of professional staff. In documentation and development of training material, (e.g., pictures in manuals, videos or capturing stories of change for monitoring and evaluation) include the views, images and experiences of both men and women.
- A cultural shift within communities and institution is necessary for comprehensive and sustainable mainstreaming to occur; this includes strengthening of an internal gender-sensitive culture, uncovering unconscious bias, and promotion of gendered diversity and inclusion. An overall institutional culture change is necessary for gender mainstreaming to be realized
- Intentional targeting of women to participate and benefit from intervention initiatives. This includes explicitly inviting women to trainings as well as men. Intentional involvement of women, adjusting training days, times and locations and continuous community and stakeholder dialogue on existing cultural

limitations is key in addressing these challenges. Active encouragement and intentional “targeting” of women to participate as direct trainees is key. It is important to identify and work with existing governance systems targeting women such as Women’s Affairs offices and the Gender Focal Person at the local level (for example at the woreda level) to find women who could be future project beneficiaries.

- Research and data collection needs to have a strong focus on collecting sex disaggregated data that captures the numbers and percentages of males and females’ participants in needs assessment, project design, project’s intervention such as trainings, seminars, and impact assessment. It is important to keep note of gendered challenges and interventions in order to be better targeted and effective in addressing the needs of the different genders.
- Technical intervention manuals such as crop production or processing guidelines need to include intervention strategies that intentionally seeks to empower both genders with information that responds to their gender specific needs and to promote increased profits and production.
- There is also a need for increased male involvement in gender awareness as it will contribute towards a narrative change in the perception that gender intervention is “a woman’s affair”. Ultimately, joint access to information and participation is a more significant driver of gender equity than only involving women. Considering the central role that women play in agricultural intervention programs, the project design needs to factor in men in examining cultural barriers that leave women disempowered to make decisions that improve overall agricultural productivity.
- Institutional support for women is a leverage point that women can access through aggregation. Working with women’s groups, women’s leaders, or female trader groups can allow women to access a vegetable cooperative/association could for facilitate their access to seed and capital.
- As part of the knowledge management strategy, understanding of the reciprocal links between an intervention at one level and an outcome at another needs to be central to the monitoring and evaluation process.

Recommendations for National stakeholders:

- Intervention programs need to target sociocultural leverage points that ease women’s labour burdens and make it realistic for women in smallholder farmer households to participate. The smallholder agricultural sector depends on women’s labour within the household. At the local level in Ethiopia, the woreda government can encourage communities and development partners to champion for the reduction of women’s labour burden. It is only by reducing the labour burden of women through strategies such as the use of labour-saving technologies for home gardens and farm production that agricultural productivity among women will increase.
- The Gender focal persons and Ethiopia’s Gender Policy Team at multi-levels of governance ability to identify and respond to gender related needs in technical programmes should be enhanced; this includes continuous strengthening of institutional understanding of gender in agriculture issues should be.
- At the national level, it is necessary to consolidate the gender experiences of different stakeholders and governance levels, and then to act; Sex-disaggregated data consolidation and statistics on the different agricultural target groups is critical.
- Beyond each program, there is need to develop an iterative knowledge management strategy to handle data and institutionalize learning that can support gender aware policy planning at the national level.

The overall goal of integrating gender sensitive approaches in agriculture is to continuously examine the existing practices in households and communities; identify practices that inhibit agricultural development for men and women; and promote alternative strategies that recognize and address the gender barriers. An integrated intervention for women smallholder farmers recognizes the centrality of gender equity in food production and marketing for overall productivity and income gains. Even though gender sensitive intervention programs can be time consuming and resource intensive due to the focus on sustainable behavioural changes, approaches that empower women are ultimately key in accomplishing long term agricultural productivity outcomes.

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Appendix 1 Incorporating a gender-aware approach

This diagram gives an overview of how gender aware practices be identified, designed and implemented in a way that considers the local, existing differences and inequalities between men and women, and contribute to the promotion of gender equality in agricultural intervention programmes. It includes criteria for evaluating whether intervention strategies are following a gender-responsive approach to better respond to the needs and views of women and men.

Table 1 *Criteria for evaluating gender-responsiveness in agricultural intervention projects*

Criteria	Explanations of criteria
1. The development and application of the practice have been informed by gender analysis	Gender analysis: At the outset of the project, develop or introduce an analysis of who has what and why, who does what and why, who makes decisions and why, and who needs what and why is carried out to develop an understanding of the site-specific gender, cultural and socio-economic context. This analysis explores differential vulnerability of men and women to risk, opportunities and benefits, power relations within the household and the community, willingness to take on risk, and modes of access to sources of information. Findings of this analysis inform the intervention strategy.
2. All work related to the practice has involved the participation and engagement of men and women, those who implement the practice	Participation and engagement: Female and male farmers are involved in developing, adapting, testing and adjusting practices to meet their needs, preferences, and opportunities. Communities and experts work together to understand local problems, climate projections and available assets and services, and to identify and test potential solutions, reducing existing gender inequalities and discrimination. Institutions are strengthened to continue fostering stakeholder engagement.
3. Efforts are made to reduce the constraints to uptake of the practice	Constraints to uptake of practices are addressed: Findings of the gender analysis are used to understand where there may be constraints to uptake of the practice, such as unequal roles in decision-making, unequal access to information or credit, and unequal ownership of land. By promoting an equitable access to resources and participation in a way that all potential end-users can benefit from information and capacity development related to the opportunities from the agricultural intervention practices.
4. The practice results in immediate benefits for men and women	Immediate benefits: The practice itself is designed to produce benefits for both men and women. These benefits include improvements in agricultural yields; reduction in the time, energy and labour spent by food producers, particularly women, on their agricultural activities; and increases in women's access to and control of agricultural inputs and income.
5. The practice results in long-term benefits for men and women	Long-term benefits: The practice itself contributes to longer-term changes in equality between men and women. It may enhance men's and women's resilience and agricultural productivity; increase women's access to resources; and increase participation of women.

Note: Table 1 adapted from "Gender Responsive Approach to Climate Smart Agriculture: Evidence and guidance for practitioners" (Nelson et al., 2016).

Appendix 2 Overview of gender reflections for agricultural development projects

- Do women actors want to address the barriers and adopt the required intervention(s)?
- Are they able to adopt the new interventions? (Reflect on resources such as time and capital)
- Has this been discussed with the women, their community and other stakeholders involved?
- In order to adopt gender responsive approaches, do the women and their communities have concrete information on the impact of the shift in approach resulting from the gender focus.
- Have women and their cultural context been prepared to continuously supply, the quality of produce, such as seeds required.
- Does the gender intervention focus on both men and women related barriers and intervention strategies?
- Where is it most strategic to direct the intended gender intervention?
- How have other similar contexts prepared to deal with what the existing gender gaps and intervention implications- what positive and negative lessons can be adopted?
- What needs does the project address for you as a woman?
- As women, how do you feel about your participation in the intervention project?
- What benefits do you get from the participation?
- What are challenges for you as a woman in this project design, activities and benefits?
- If we want to reach out to women to inform them this agricultural intervention initiative, which person or organisation should we use to reach women in particular?

Appendix 3 Gender Transformative Approaches

For Projects was to support meaningful integration of women smallholder farmers, they need to embrace strategies that promote a sustainable positive impact on their agency, income generation and ability to retain control and use of their earned income is paramount. Projects that incorporate gender transformative interventions mainstream gender concerns in the project activities, monitoring and evaluation systems. Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs) unpack the understanding that improving agency, ensuring equitable access to and control over resources, challenging power relationships, and promoting equitable intervention frameworks are key to improving agribusiness interventions in food systems(O’Leary, 2020). The overall goal is promoting meaningful integration of women smallholder farmers in a way that promotes sustainable positive impact on their agency, income generation and ability to retain control and use of their earned income. The overall goal of transformative approaches is to support meaningful integration of women smallholder farmers in a way that will achieve a sustained positive impact on their productivity, income generation and ability to retain control and use of their earned income is paramount.

GTAs provide an alternative to the “business as usual” approach to gender integration and, by focusing on addressing structural change, to move beyond instrumentalist interventions and to address the underlying causes of gender inequality; rather than focusing exclusively on the self-improvement of individual women, GTAs work towards transforming power dynamics and structures that reinforce gender inequity with the wider purpose of promoting gender equality and improving development outcomes. This more systemic understanding implicates those doing the development – development agencies and professionals – and requires their reflection, change and transformation. This has far-reaching implications for how development is done, as GTAs are intentionally reflexive: they recognize that norms are not necessarily “out there” and beyond the purview of certain development actors. Norms are, in fact, subsumed in and (re)produced by all development actors. As such, the norms and ways of working of development agencies and professionals are necessarily transformed when GTAs are implemented(Wong *et al.*, 2019).

Key conceptual distinctions of GTAs include understanding gender as a social relation as opposed to focusing solely on gender roles. In this way, we understand that “women” and “men” are not homogenous categories but heterogeneous based on other intersecting categories of social status such as class, ethnicity, caste, etc. Hence, social relations of gender inform the relative social positionings of diverse women and men. GTAs are related to approaches to women’s empowerment but are also distinct. One main difference is that most understandings of GTAs insist on working with both women and men to transform the social relations of gender to be more equitable, for example in decision-making, access to resources and how women and men are relatively valued in all spheres of society. What we learn from the experience with women’s empowerment initiatives is there are gaps in the promotion of women’s empowerment approaches as a strategy that only focuses on women; this acts as a cautionary tale for the adoption and inevitable adaptation of GTAs over time(Dinesh *et al.*, 2017). Some major tenets of GTAs include:

- 1) Changes are fostered in three domains: individual capacities, the gendered expectations embedded within social relations in different institutional sites (e.g., household, community) and institutional rules and practices.**
- 2) These changes lead to more and better livelihood choices for poor and marginalized women and men and more equitable norms and social institutions.**
- 3) The changes lead to an expansion in women’s potential to contribute to and benefit from interventions.**

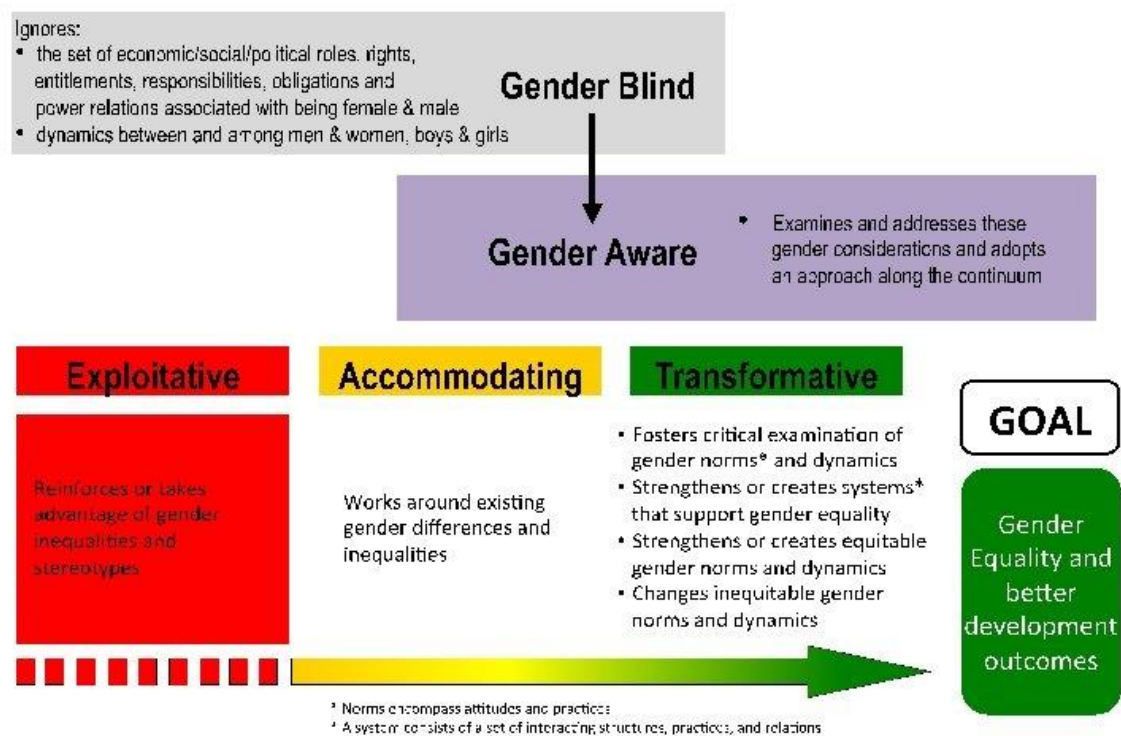
The implementation of GTAs has entailed participatory and capacity building methodologies. These are not unique to GTAs but are used for their specific qualities. Participatory strategies for implementing GTAs, which are characterized by their potential to encourage critical self-reflection and self-awareness via social learning. These characteristics allow for generating new knowledge, learning and insight derived from continual and

iterative cycles of action and reflection. The “doing” is the basis for new knowledge derived from critical reflection of action, which in turn informs further action. Capacity-strengthening and organizational.

Learning draw on principles of transformative learning, which extends beyond knowledge and skills acquisition and requires shifts in mental models, values and beliefs. The systemic nature of change implied in GTAs requires different framings of both how capacity-strengthening is approached and the role of development agencies, to, in particular, take into account their own transformation through learning(Wong *et al.*, 2019).

GTAs focus on addressing the foundations of gender inequity. Development approaches aiming to deliver interventions need to consider women smallholder farmer’s ability to navigate the many evolving factors that influence their power to make, and act on, and decide on their agribusiness activities and the income it generates. Gender approaches reveal these linkages and avoids the unintended negative consequences of fragmented approaches to intervention delivery. These approaches are dynamic and better aligned to the knowledge and actions of people that these plans seek to benefit. It reveals how gender norms, institutions, and power relations causing unequal access training, agricultural resources, markets, and technologies(Drucza *et al.*, 2017a). In doing so, gender transformative approaches uncover entry-points to solutions that can address the full complexity the skewed productivity between men and women. Approaches that flow from this starting point build resilience to unanticipated shocks and trade-offs that undermine pathways to improved income and productivity among women smallholder farmers(Fischer *et al.*, 2017). This includes power interplays across domains and between individuals, households and their societies. Gender transformative approaches are collaborative, and evolving frameworks with gender mainstreaming strategies across the program lifecycle(O’Leary, 2020).Ultimately, the gender aware intervention approach is part of the gender transformative continuum, that focuses on the initial awareness required to facilitate meaningful participation by women.

Gender Equality Continuum Tool





Wageningen Centre for Development
Innovation
Wageningen University & Research
P.O. Box 88
6700 AB Wageningen
The Netherlands
T +31 (0)317 48 68 00
wur.eu/cdi

Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation supports value creation by strengthening capacities for sustainable development. As the international expertise and capacity building institute of Wageningen University & Research we bring knowledge into action, with the aim to explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life. With approximately 30 locations, 6,800 members (6,000 fte) of staff and 12,900 students, Wageningen University & Research is a world leader in its domain. An integral way of working, and cooperation between the exact sciences and the technological and social disciplines are key to its approach.

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Wageningen University & Research
P.O. Box 88
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