

Capacity Development of Public Sector Staff: LIVES Approach in Graduate Training and Research

Introduction

- Gender responsive long-term training of public sector staff is key to develop institutional capacity for implementation and scaling out of value chain development approaches and interventions.
- LIVES supports agricultural value chain oriented graduate training and research of public sector staff to develop research and development capacity of partners and increase uptake and application of project results and lessons.
- LIVES engages in a participatory, consultative process with partners to identify researchable problems and make graduate research useful to address local development challenges in support of specific value chains.

Approaches

- Assess situation and define vision for development of specific value chains
- Stakeholder consultations to identify long-term capacity development needs of public sector staff
- Identify fields of study and research priorities for graduate students
- Project steering committee develops criteria and procedure for selection and approval of candidates
- Call for partners at all levels to nominate candidates, maintaining *commodity* and *gender* balance
- A co-supervisory approach to supervise and mentor graduate students in a structured way
- Graduate seminars to allow project partners to provide feedback on graduate research proposals and thesis results

Results

- 100 tuition and thesis support for public extension staff: 97 enrolled, 49% female participation
- 70 thesis only support for public research staff: 31 graduate research contracts, 10% female participation
- 30 competitive research support: 25 graduate research contracts, 16% female participation
- So far 26 (7 female) graduate fellows completed, 27% female completion



Summary

- Graduate research is an integral component of LIVES project implementation and has been instrumental in many ways. It has helped document the effect of project interventions and refined intervention strategies accordingly.
- Although project partners commit to achieve 50 percent gender balance in the selection of graduate students, achieving the target has been challenging, particularly in the public research system.
- Strong partnership engagement, publicizing the fellowship opportunity, and coaching and mentoring of female candidates has helped increase female participation in the public extension system.
- The joint supervision and mentorship approach provided graduate fellows with rich experience and intellectual stimulation from different perspectives.
- Graduate seminars provided opportunities for project partners to provide feedback on graduate research and ensure that graduate research is relevant to address local development challenges.