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Expanding Opportunities: Scaling Up Gender and Social Inclusion in AICCRA An Equality and Empowerment Approach

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Introduction

Limiting global warming to the 2°C target in the 2015 Paris Agreement, and reaching the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, will require large-scale expansion of climate-resilient approaches in food systems. Coordinated action is needed from global to local levels, with research, policy and investment, across private, public and civil society sectors. At the same time, these approaches need to address gender equality and social inclusion. More attention needs to be given to the factors that constrain change and innovation in the poorest and most vulnerable groups. Participatory approaches that embed equality, more equal power relations and social justice into the design and practice of climate-resilient agriculture are critical.

Can scaling-up of climate-resilient agriculture approaches be consistent with gender equality, and integrate the conditions and mechanisms necessary to address inequality? Are small-scale, participatory, inclusive, and localized approaches to address cultural and socio-economic differences consistent with the broad-brush approaches required to scale up? Scaling takes place at both vertical and horizontal levels, or combinations of the two, in different contextual,

geographical, socioeconomic and environmental contexts. Key aspects include government strategies; private-sector business models and investment plans; mainstreaming of institutional changes; and/or informing policy. Vertical scaling translates from household to local to national to global levels, through one or more of these mechanisms, while horizontal scaling may translate across regions, communities or countries (Aggarwal et al., 2018).

This framework integrates CGIAR and AICCRA experience in gender and socially-inclusive approaches to reach women, youth and under-represented groups, to develop a model for scaling up climate resilient agriculture that integrates equality and empowerment.

Gender and social inclusion in climate-resilient agriculture: a framework for scaling up

This info-note is based on a four dimensional-approach to gender and socially inclusive climate resilient agriculture (see Figure 1):

- Building evidence: what are the gender and social inclusion results, benefits and differences of CSA

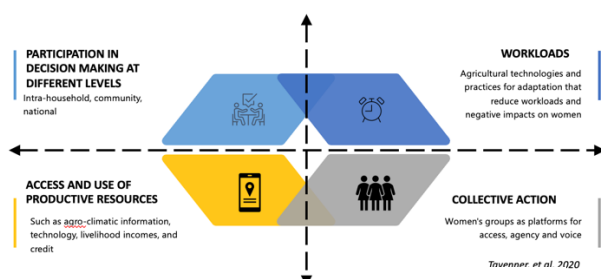
adoption?

- Enhancing the capacity of local institutions and services, including women's and community-based organizations, to close the gender and social inclusion gap.

Ensuring that gender and women's empowerment are dealt with in coordinated climate and agricultural policy, and promoting the participation and leadership of women, youth and under-represented groups in policy making at all levels from local to global.

Building mechanisms to promote finance and investment with a gender and social inclusion lens (Huyer et al., 2016).

Figure 1. Gender equality for climate resilience



While women often do not have the resources to implement adaptation solutions in farming, even if they are equally aware of its impacts (Assan et al., 2020), initial research indicates that women can experience empowerment from the adoption of CSA practices and technologies. This can take the form of increased decision making over household and farming expenditures, access to employment and incomes, and participation in community decision making (Huyer & Partey, 2020).

A review of CGIAR gender and climate research (Huyer et al., 2021) found that to be empowering and promote equality, gender and socially-inclusive scaling needs to integrate intersectionality with

four dimensions of gender equality in climate-resilient agriculture for resilience and agency (see Figure 1): Participation in decision making at household, community, national and global levels; reduced workloads; access and use of productive resources including information; and collective action.

characterized by interrelations between ecological and, increasingly, social systems, such as weather impacts, viability of natural resources, access to markets, and societal safety nets. Vulnerability affects individuals and social groups according to the rights and opportunities to which they are entitled (Sen, 1981). These entitlements often vary according to gender, ethnicity, religion, class and age conditions (Denton, 2002; Djoudi et al., 2016).

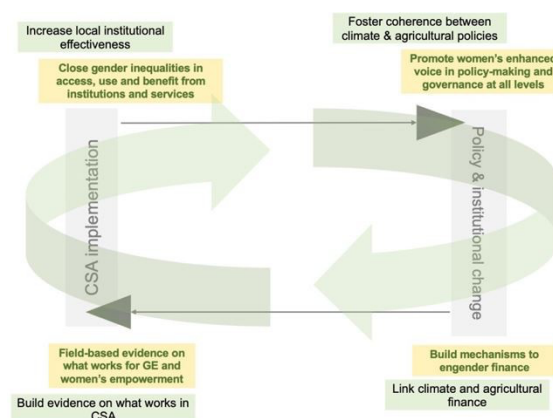


Figure 2 - Gender and socially-inclusive climate-resilient agriculture.

Collective action and organizing is a crucial ingredient of gender-and socially-inclusive scaling. Women's, youth, farmers' and community based organizations can act as platforms for establishing and spreading information, new technologies and practices, and provide a base for joint purchase and management of technologies (Huyer et al, 2023). Community organizations in Kenya and Tanzania are platforms for delivery of farmer advisory services and agricultural inputs, mobilization of financial resources for loans and mobilization of labour, for example in the

construction of soil and water conservation structures. They also serve as platforms for demonstration farms and agricultural knowledge. Comprised of mixed, women-only and youth groups (with 50-80% women members), the CBO platforms in these communities are adoption platform for technologies and innovations such as resilient varieties of root crops (cassava and sweet potato), cereals (maize, millet, sorghum) and soil and water conservation (Recha et al., 2017).

Gender and socially-inclusive scaling for equality and empowerment

A scaling approach that addresses inequalities and promotes empowerment (Figure 3) crosscuts the four areas of gender equality for CRA (Figure 2), in relation to the key aspects of CRA (Figure 1). It extends across scales of household, community, landscape and region, with policy, information and finance as key scaling vectors for adoption of climate-resilient agriculture. Targetting the key gender equality dimensions of participation in decision making, access and benefits from resources (including benefits from technology and information), and reduction of workloads, in an intersectional manner building on collective action, will generate momentum to gender equality, empowerment (agency) and means to confront gender norms (Huyer et al, 2019; 2021).

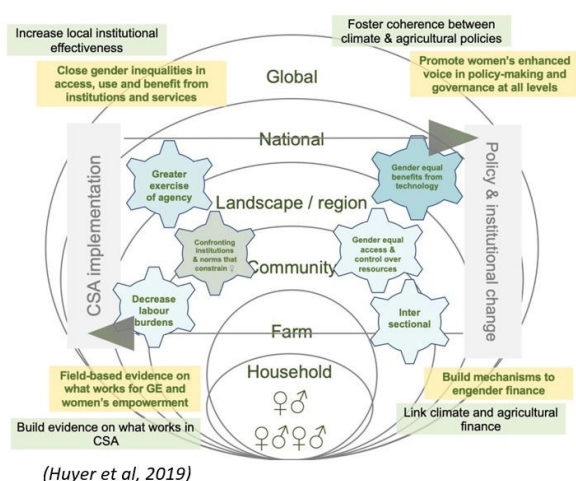


Figure 3. Gender and socially inclusive scaling forempowerment and equality

Experience and examples from CCAFS and elsewhere demonstrate how this approach can be actualized:

- As one vector for scaling, climate services disseminate agro- and climate-information to farmers through extension systems, digital and other media, capacity development, and the private sector. Climateservices can contribute to gender equality if they address the needs and priorities of both women and men, increase their resilience to cope with climate change, increase their incomes and production, and provide a means for women to challenge gender norms through public discussions and airing of their views (Huyer, 2019; Sterling & Huyer, 2010). Access to weather forecasts and CSA information supports women to make informed agricultural decisions, increases their confidence and decision making on the farm, and increases food security (Gumucio et al, 2020; Mittal, 2016). In Madhya Pradesh, it also encouraged them to implement new adaptation practices, which were transmitted to other women farmers in the area (Huyer et al, 2021).
- Integrating equality and empowerment into climate policy, decision making and leadership. Policy at regional, national and global levels is one common scaling avenue, although success in integrating gender into climate policy is limited.
- Women's groups have long been active in environmental policymaking (Chen, 1995). Women's NGOs played a big role in shaping policy debates in the leadup to and during three major UN conferences: the Rio conference on environment (1992), the Vienna conference on human rights (1993) and the Cairo conference on population (1994). Coordinated action by women's groups contributed to preparatory policy processes (Chen, 1995). Activism by women's and social

groups remains a major strategy to influence global climate policy, through groups such as WEDO and the Women's Constituency. At the national level, women's and other civil society representative groups are increasingly becoming involved in consultative processes in different aspects of climate policy, including the Ghana CSA Policy Platform. In its roadmap to integrating gender equality in NDCs, UNDP notes the importance of engaging in consultations with women's stakeholder organizations for representation of key concerns, perspectives, and in turn empowerment of women in national policy processes (UNDP, 2016).

- Inclusive finance strategies for scaling resilience. Finance plays a role in scaling out climate-resilient agriculture by providing the resource base and livelihoods framework for implementation and expansion of climate-resilient practices. Inclusive finance is about banking products and financial services that are available to poor populations, such as mobile money. Gender equality finance strategies include working through local women's groups, self-help groups, village savings and loans (VSLAs) and other group-based economic mutual support groups to support credit access and production support. Membership of VSLAs in Vietnam promoted access to finance and training on coffee production and was linked to increased equality in household decision-making and increased sharing of domestic responsibilities (Simelton et al., 2021).

In Ghana, IFAD scaled up this approach in its work with District Value Chain Committees (DVCCs) across the country, building on local women's groups to access finance and production support. In Northern Ghana, DVCCs manage planning, implementation, coordination and monitoring of activities in maize, soya and sorghum value chains. DVCCs

include buyers, input providers (seeds and fertilizers), service providers (extension and tractor services), financial institutions like rural banks, and farmer-based organizations (FBOs). Empowerment results for women farmers included: ability to buy additional pieces of land, attending management training, decision making power over their own income, engaging in non-traditional activities such as buying and operating a truck, employing other people in small and medium sized enterprises (IFAD, 2016).

Experience of AICCRA

AICCRA is implementing different strategies for scaling that results in empowerment. Examples include:

Women Leaders in the Chitetezo Farmers' Federation, Zambia

The Chitetezo Farmer Federation in Zambia is an organization representing 55 farmer cooperatives focused on improving the cost-efficiency of community-based legume supply chains. The Federation is part of Community Markets for Conservation (COMACO). The Federation has committed to representation of women in its leadership and has a high rate of participation of women farmers (52%).

Some changes are already seen, and we can do more so that our voices can be heard. We need more female leaders that can speak. When females speak a lot of households come on board and practice what we are doing¹.

Participatory Rangeland Management (PRM)

In Baringo county, Kenya, women played a significant role in different aspects of participatory rangeland management. Their participation in PRM

¹ <https://aiccra.cgiar.org/news/farmer-livestock-keeper-community-leader-meet-esther-zulu-nyimba-district-zambia>

has increased women's voice and agency in governance and potential to benefit from rangeland resources. They participated in management planning, leadership in rangeland forums, and collective action initiatives. In many cases women actively contributed to resource management and planning by identifying resources they value and advocating for protection of those resources. Support for existing groups and the creation of new collective groups were instrumental in enabling women to take up new income generating activities, such as previously mentioned beekeeping.

Scaling through gender-targeted agro-advisory information

In Mali, RiceAdvice is a free android app that provides customized recommendations on crop calendar, fertilizer, and weed management. Women users were targeted through 120 women service providers, who reached 20,436 women farmers with customized advisories. Rice yields increased more in women's fields (1.0 t/ha) than in men's fields (0.85/ha) as a result (Dossou-Yovo et al., 2023).

In Ghana, sweet potato and cowpea, among other vegetables, are often referred to as "women's crops". AICCRA hosted Farmer Field Days across 22 farming communities to demonstrate how yields can be improved using climate information services, climate-smart agriculture and health innovations such as biopesticide for managing cowpea and maize pests and disease, as well as organic soil amendments to manage soil borne pathogens. Women farmers made up nearly half the participants at these events, since women tend to cultivate crops such as cowpea more than men. This is due to the nutrition value of the crop for household consumption, as well as the income it generates in the local markets.

Cecilia Bellintaa, a farmer and member of the Doggoh-Tamparizie Mother-to-Mother Support Group:

"Before AICCRA, we used to plant the cowpea by broadcasting. Now we plant the cowpea in rows. We have noticed that planting in rows makes it easier to clear weeds and apply pesticides. Also with the new cowpea varieties, we know we will get more yields and make more money to support our families."

In addition to increased incomes, women are connecting more through these field demonstration activities and devising common solutions to the practical challenges that come up in implementing CSA practices. In one community, for instance, women have reignited self-help groups to provide the labour for planting maize in rows, a requirement for improved varieties of maize.

As a result of engagement in community dialogues, women are participating more in community forums. Women in Ghana communities began to actively participate in CIS and CSA discussion forums. They made sure that the time selected to air radio programmes was suitable for them. In one community, farmers settled on an off-farm day to air the programme. Men farmers preferred the programme to be aired by mid-morning when they would be home. Women however, commented that even on off-farm days, they visit the markets so that airing programmes in the morning or afternoon did not fit their schedule. The community agreed on a time later in the day. In fact, in all the communities it was decided to air programmes from 8pm onwards, a time when women indicated they would have finished their chores and could make time to listen².

² F. Obeng, email communication, May 18, 2023.

Conclusion

When integrated into vertical and horizontal scaling mechanisms – policy at local, national and global levels; climate information; inclusive finance mechanisms and investment incentives; and gender- and socially-inclusive collective action for agency and empowerment in rural areas – a set of pathways for scaling of different CRA dimensions can be developed that will be more inclusive. A gender and socially-inclusive approach to scaling can identify the mechanisms needed to bridge the gap between the wider approaches required to scale innovative CRA and participatory approaches that address the priorities and needs of different groups in society.

When implemented to support gender equality, scaling can also be a strategy for empowerment. The AICCRA experience shows that scaling in a way that promotes one or more of the four areas of gender equality and climate resilience, can also have wide-ranging empowerment effects.

Methodologies to measure empowerment results of climate-resilient agriculture have been developed:

- Gender and Climate Empowerment Index (Tesfaye et al, 2022)
- Gender Profile for Climate-smart Agriculture Uptake (CAAFS, 2021)

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