FR1.1: THE PROCESS TO "GENDER EXPERT": LEARNING FROM THE GREAT MODEL

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OUTLINE

- Discussion of the "Gender Expert"
- Overview of GREAT Model
- Methods
- Findings
- Discussion

"GENDER EXPERT"

- Historical context: the need for the "Gender Expert"
- Institutions resist formative change
- Feminist goals and approaches can be lost in gender mainstreaming efforts
- Feminist knowledge vis-à-vis Gender knowledge (or just sex-disaggregated knowledge?)



"GENDER EXPERT"

- **Historical context: the need for the "Gender Expert"**
  - Boserup 1970: Growing attention among Development communities
  - Beijing for Action 1996: Set goals of gender equity and process of gender mainstreaming
  - MDGs & SDGs -> Donors call for gender inclusion in programming and monitoring

  - Despite reluctance to claim title "Gender Expert", it's gained prevalence along with a growth of pressions with specialized forms of knowledge, commodification of knowledge production, and decline in class analysis
- Institutions resist formative change
- Feminist goals and approaches can be lost in gender mainstreaming efforts
- Feminist knowledge vis-à-vis Gender knowledge



"GENDER EXPERT"

- Historical context: the need for the "Gender Expert"
- **Institutions resist formative change**
  - Differences between scientific disciplines influence effectiveness and strategic approaches of gender professionals
  - "Politics of influencing" depends on the individual
- Feminist goals and approaches can be lost in gender mainstreaming efforts
- Feminist knowledge vis-à-vis Gender knowledge (or just sex-disaggregated knowledge?)



"GENDER EXPERT"

- Historical context: the need for the "Gender Expert"
- Institutions resist formative change
- **Feminist goals and approaches can be lost in gender mainstreaming efforts**
  - The ability to convey information to others and apply that information to solve a problem means working within the institution and its priorities, etc.
  - Not all researchers of gender will be grounded in feminist theory and research methods
- Feminist knowledge vis-à-vis Gender knowledge



"GENDER EXPERT"

- Historical context: the need for the "Gender Expert"
- Institutions resist formative change
- Feminist goals and approaches can be lost in gender mainstreaming efforts
- **Feminist knowledge vis-à-vis Gender knowledge**
  - Location can frame different forms of 'expertise'
  - However, proposing frameworks for assessing individuals and organizations in relation to gender can
    - reinforce an elite class, and/or
    - ignore heterogeneity among international experts



"GENDER EXPERT"

Definition:

(1) an individual with feminist knowledge regarding the cause-and-effect relationship between policies, actions, and/or activities and gender inequalities, and

(2) is formally requested to provide their/his/her knowledge and services.



Hoard, S. 2015. *Gender Expertise in Public Policy: Towards a Theory of Policy Success*. Palgrave Macmillan: New York, NY

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Critique:

(1) "cause and effect" suggest positivist approach that contradicts "non-positivist feminist knowledge"

(2) The resistance to engagement by the institution is not only about knowledge/expertise of individual, but also a) stigma of gender work and b) the influence of larger social and political structures



Kunz, R.; Prügl, E. Introduction: Gender Experts and Gender Expertise. *European Journal of Politics and Gender* **2019**, *2*, 3–21

FEMINIST KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

The process of feminist knowledge transfer to achieve the goal of "transformation in gendered power relations for more equal societies, workplaces, policies, and communities":

1. An understanding that gender inequality is "structural" and "systemic", and a capacity to use gender lenses or feminist glasses in knowledge transfer scenarios.

2. Transfer of knowledge which aims at being "transformative"; that is, knowledge use should aim not only at better understanding, but also at changing the world, fighting against social injustices, and redressing unequal power relations.

3. Feminist knowledge understood as situated knowledge, filtered through the standpoints of different knowers, in which some ways of knowing are privileged over others. This implies the acknowledgement of the plurality of feminist "knowledges".

4. An explicit acknowledgement of the inherently "political" nature of the contexts in which such knowledge is transferred, as well as of feminist knowledge transfer as a site for contestation.

5. A key focus on "reflexivity" in order to acknowledge biases and limitations and allow for the recognition of multiple perspectives.



Bustelo, M.; Ferguson, L.; Forest, M. 2016. *The Politics of Feminist Knowledge Transfer: Gender Training and Gender Expertise*.

GREAT MODEL

- Gender-responsive Researchers Equipped for Agricultural Transformation (GREAT)
- Initiated as 5-year program 2016-2021
- focused on training
  - interdisciplinary teams (bio-physical and social scientists),
  - mainly from National Agriculture Research Institutes (NARIs) in
  - sub-Saharan Africa
  - on gender responsive crop breeding topics.
- Level 1 training: 5 Themes (T5 online and in-depth for social scientists)
- Level 2 training: initiated in 2021



GREAT MODEL

Building from

- Njuki (2016) four-level skills and capacities for gender integration in agricultural research
- Ferguson (2019) KDA approach



Figure 1 Skills and capacities for gender integration in agricultural research (based on Njuki [illegible])

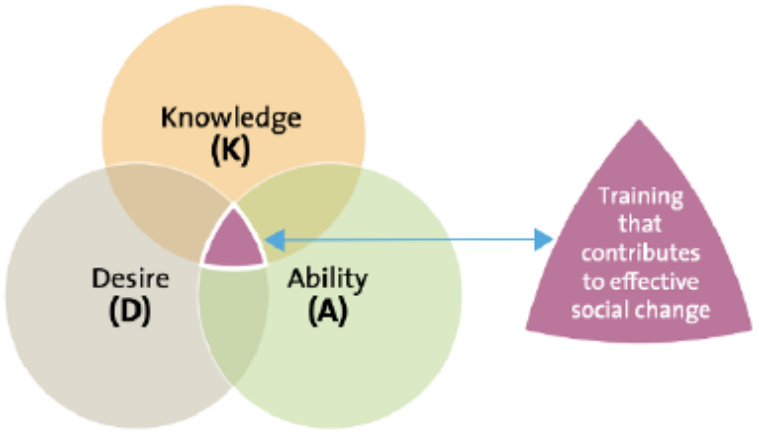
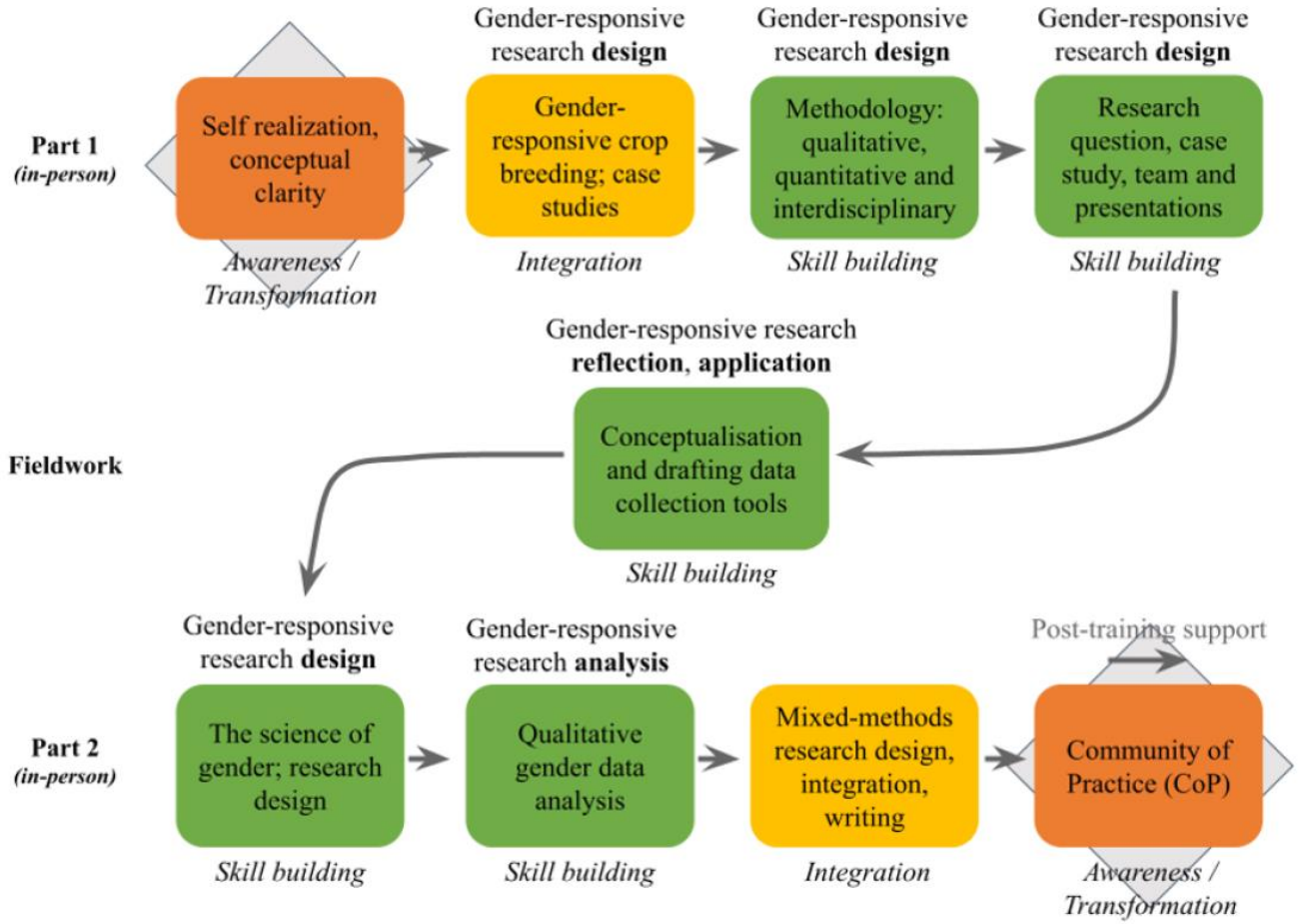


Figure 2 Knowledge, Desire, and Ability: the KDA approach to training for effective social change (based on Ferguson 2019).

GREAT MODEL

Conceptual Framework:

- Self-reflection
- Interdisciplinarity
- Applied Learning
- Enabling Environment and Learning Environment



METHODS

- Secondary Data: GREAT public documents and the "MLE" Program
- Key informant interviews
  - Level 1 and Level 2
  - Level 2 interviews included specific question regarding the term "Gender Expert"
- Coding and analysis: content analysis using Hoard's framework
- Positionality:
  - Insider/Outsider to GREAT program
    - Joined in 2020 (after most trainings were delivered)
    - Participant observations
  - PhD in Women's Studies and self-identifies as feminist researcher in agriculture-environmental context



FINDINGS

An individual with feminist knowledge regarding the cause-and-effect relationship between policies, actions, and/or activities and gender inequalities

- The GREAT model supports the attainment of this knowledge in several ways.
  - Focus on the foundation of gender basics in Level 1 training, such as sessions
  - Sessions throughout the course also demonstrate a focus on methods
  - Course is designed to support classroom learning with learning-by-doing, field time and mentorship



FINDINGS

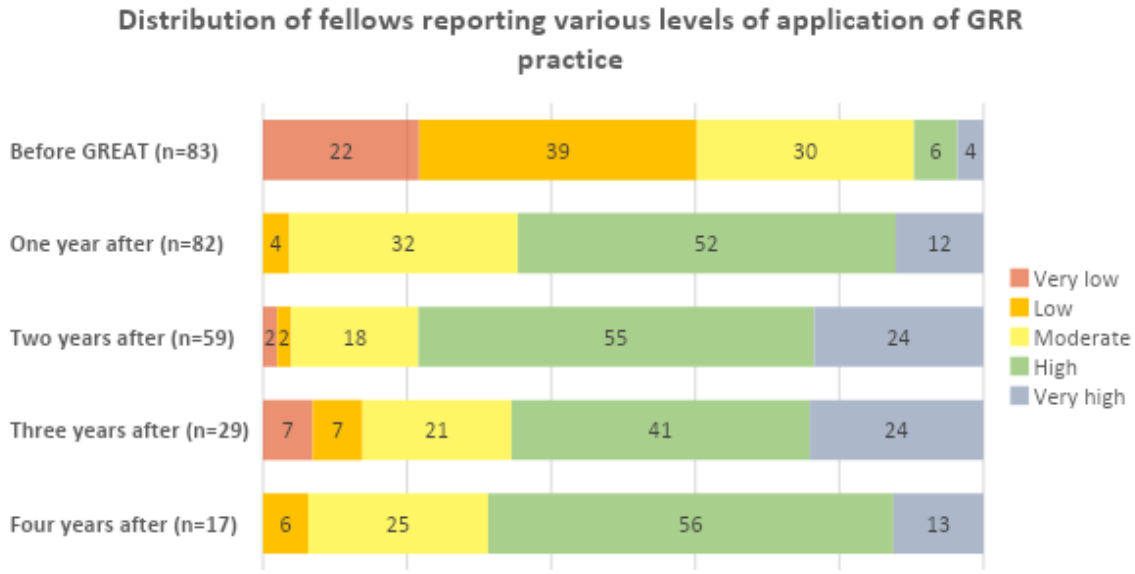
An individual with feminist knowledge regarding the cause-and-effect relationship between policies, actions, and/or activities and gender inequalities

Different knowledges and interest in knowledge:

- Minimal knowledge of gender concepts prior and diverse application after

- Interest in research tools over theory:
  "If we could increase the percentage of practice, it would be better" (Social Scientist, NARI, Level 1 KII, gender not given)

- Emphasis on sex-disaggregated data and inclusion of women in data collection
  "once you include gender, there is equity. If there is equity, there is really development of farmers" (Biophysical Scientist, Level 1 KII, gender and institution not given).



FINDINGS

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Less clear: the relationship between research and gender equality:

- Diverse understandings of this connection
- Emphasis on sex-disaggregated data and inclusion of women in data collection
  - "Gender sensitive" research design ensured 30% women participation, as their crop was still "dominated by males"
  - "once you include gender, there is equity. If there is equity, there is really development of farmers" (Biophysical Scientist, Level 1 KII, gender and institution not given).

- The emphasis on quantitative data was limited in its consideration of heterogeneity and included "speculative statements".



FINDINGS

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Institutional transformation to addressing gender inequalities:

- Sessions explicitly to build capacity in this
- While there was clear commitment on the part of participants to integrate gender into their institutions, their discussions did not directly tie back to how these policies could address inequalities

"I also love the part that has to do with the communication… with the institutions in order to bring about transformation. So, this now becomes like a whole package. After you have done data analysis to get your results, what do you do with it? So, this is not just a half-way thing; it has been wholesome." (Biophysical Scientist, Level 1 KII, gender and institution not given).



FINDINGS

And, who "(2) is formally requested to provide her knowledge and services."

Others (non-gender experts) are able to identify the need for that specific capability (gender expertise) and delegate work accordingly (to gender experts).

Program addresses:

- the recognition and understanding of social science, which can support the recruitment of GREAT participants as gender focal points in projects.
- the integration of gender into design of research projects, creating a demand for these capacities as well.
- the importance of working together as a team and the role of a social scientist within the research

FINDINGS

And, who "(2) is formally requested to provide her knowledge and services."

Participants also reported increased confidence in their own ability.

"GREAT increased my confidence to engage with biophysical scientists and tell them that [they] can collaborate and there is more ground we can cover together… There is a lot of demand for my services now.' (Social Scientist, NARI, woman, Level 1 KII)."

Biophysical scientists also reported an increased confidence as well as opportunities to apply this knowledge within their institutions. For example, one Level 2 participant states:

"Now I have capacity to mentor other graduate students or junior staff on gender. So, I will be able to mentor and supervise others in using these gender-responsive strategies in research and I'm happy about[.]" (Biophysical Scientist, NARI, man, Level 2 KII).

The increased confidence among biophysical scientists sometimes translated into doing the gender-related research themselves, rather than engaging social scientists as gender experts.

FINDINGS

Are you a gender expert?

4 of 5 Level 2 KIIs said yes, because:

- Knowledge and skills [via GREAT course]
- Approached to advise and lead others in gender work
- One who is not gender expert, prefers "gender aware" (biophysical scientist)

But… they still needed more experience (3 of 5)

Participants considered the trainers gender experts



DISCUSSION

Participants were limited and varied in reaching Hoard's definition of a "Gender Expert"

- Focused mainly on sex-disaggregated data and approaching gender knowledge, but maybe not feminist knowledge
- Not articulating connections between research and gender equality
- Training social and biophysical scientists together:
  - Help create common understandings
  - Increase appreciation of social science
  - But, not necessarily demand for deeper social science

- Participants might benefit from discussing a spectrum of gender knowledge, research, and application



BROADER DISCUSSION

- **Variety of expertise, roles, experiences under the umbrella term "gender expert"**
  - Doesn't capture the spectrum needed to
    - Institutionalize gender
    - Mainstream gender
    - Do the gender-focused/feminist work

- What is the risk of not being a gender "expert"? Is there space for critical self-reflection?

- What is the role of positionality/discipline in becoming a "gender expert"?



THANK YOU!

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Thanks to GREAT!!

Especially Margaret, Hale, Elizabeth, Brenda and Devon

