



Gender in CGIAR research

Purpose

This document provides an update to the status of gender research in the new portfolio to support agenda item 12 gender in CGIAR's research.

Action Requested

The System Council is requested to take note of these materials as an input into deliberations on gender in the research and opportunities to consolidate the gender research to ensure the CGIAR, as a collective, is able reach its impact targets. It also requests the System Council to deliberate on the newly identified research area of youth and provide advice on how to catalyze work in this area.

<p>Document category: Working document of the System Council. There is no restriction on the circulation of this document</p>
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Content

1. The GENDER Impact Platform, in its role as convener of gender research in the CGIAR, will provide an update on the status and development of the Gender Equality and Inclusion Accelerator (GEI). In the session, two areas will receive extra attention, impact assessment strategies across the CGIAR and advances made on the youth portfolio.

Status and development of the GEI Accelerator

2. The GEI accelerator proposal was finalized and has been shared with all system council members.
3. To give a better understanding of the role of Accelerators versus the Science Program, the Accelerator leads developed the following understanding, the Accelerators are programs in thematic areas (gender and social inclusion, digital innovations, capacity building/sharing) that interface with the rest of the Portfolio to catalyze transformation toward more sustainable and inclusive food systems. The three Accelerators share the following characteristics:
 - *Centers of excellence (research, practices, methods, approaches, external advocacy)*: Accelerators emphasize the standardization and dissemination of best practices, methodologies and approaches, ensuring that cutting-edge techniques are developed and consistently applied across the SPs, Accelerators and Centers.
 - *Leading the research agenda (think tanks)*: While SPs focus on conducting research and generating science and evidence, Accelerators prioritize setting and leading the research agenda in their specific domains, guiding the future direction of CGIAR's portfolio in those areas and collaborating with SPs, Accelerators and Centers to have a whole-of-portfolio approach.
 - *Capacity building*: Accelerators focus on building capacity by increasing the skills and competencies within SPs, Accelerators and Centers. This includes training and development programs that equip scientists in Centers teams to effectively implement the methods and practices evidenced/promoted by the Accelerator.
 - *Solutions delivery*: Accelerators deliver scalable, demand-driven solutions in their domains, responding to the needs of the SPs and other Accelerators, and translating research into practical applications that can be deployed across the programs.
4. The **GEI Accelerator** aims to address the challenge of deep-rooted and widespread inequalities in agrifood systems, which are projected to worsen in the coming decades. To achieve its vision of equitable and sustainable food, land, and water systems (FLWS), the Accelerator will employ a dual approach: accelerating the development and scaling of impactful **solutions** (area of work (AoW) 1) and driving systemic **change** (AoW 2) within CGIAR and among its partners. With as outcome, evidence of impactful interventions; theoretical breakthroughs; tools and approaches for research and impact for GESI in FLW systems

5. **Accelerating Solutions for Impact (AoW1):**

Problem-solving approach, focusing on identifying effective interventions that can be implemented on the ground, by co-developing and testing scalable solutions addressing the challenges faced by women, youth, and socially excluded groups in FLWS.

The AoW has 5 sub areas of work:

Supporting pathways to empowerment and resilience: Achieving gender equality and building resilience within FLWS, as aspired by the CGIAR, needs to include the empowerment of women. The following solutions will be piloted in this area of work:

- Developing and testing integrated solutions, such as Socio-Technical Innovation Bundles (STIBs), that combine technological innovations with social and institutional support to empower women in FLWS. These bundles can include training, financing, and access to markets, along with efforts to challenge discriminatory norms.
- Creating and fostering multi-stakeholder engagement to facilitate the co-design, adaptation, and adoption of empowering solutions.
- Conducting impact assessments and evaluations to identify effective approaches for strengthening women's empowerment and resilience.

Promoting equitable resource access and resilient livelihoods: Unequal access to resources, such as land, finance, information, and technology, perpetuates gender inequalities. Areas of work include:

- Developing evidence-based solutions that address gender disparities in resource access, including strategies to make digital and agricultural technologies gender-inclusive.
- Strengthening women's access to finance through initiatives like women's self-help groups and promoting financial literacy.
- Implementing social protection and livelihood interventions that target resource-poor women and enhance their asset ownership, livelihoods, and climate resilience.

Fostering equitable and inclusive norms: Gender norms, often deeply ingrained in societal expectations, frequently hinder women's progress in FLWS, both as active participants in agri-food systems and as a means of empowerment. This sub area of work explores how gender transformative approaches can tackle these restrictive norms. Examples of such approaches include:

- Designing and piloting GT interventions in collaboration with partners, focusing on shifting norms and empowering women.
- Developing and implementing gender norms measurement tools to identify and address norms that limit women's participation

Amplifying voice and influence within FLWS institutions: For FLWS to be effective and equitable, amplifying the voices and leadership of women, youth and social excluded groups is key to catalyzing change. To address this the area of work:

- Designing and implementing innovative approaches for increasing women's voice and leadership in public settings, including training programs on advocacy, leadership, and negotiation skills.
- Promoting women's participation in farmer organizations, cooperatives, and resource user groups.
- Developing and utilizing measurement tools to assess women's voice and influence in FLWS governance and track progress over time.

Enabling youth to thrive in FLWS: Young people face significant barriers to entry and success in FLWS, leading to an aging agricultural workforce. Not much research has been done on this and therefore the area of work will:

- Conduct research to understand the specific challenges and opportunities faced by youth in FLWS, including their aspirations, access to resources, and the impact of gender and other social identities.
- Develop and test interventions that address the constraints faced by youth, such as providing training, access to finance, and creating supportive policy environments.
- Engage youth in the co-design and implementation of FLWS solutions to ensure that interventions are relevant and responsive to their needs.

6. Accelerating Change (AoW2):

Taking a systemic approach, concentrating on transforming institutions, policies, and capacities to support lasting change, through metrics, methods, global policy engagement.

The AoW has 3 sub-areas of work:

Methods and Metrics: This sub-AoW focuses on developing and refining methodologies, metrics, and analytical tools for GESI research in FLWS. This includes addressing the need for context-specific measurements that capture the nuances of social processes and intangible impacts, as well as developing methodologies for assessing the gender-responsiveness of scaling efforts.

Leveraging Evidence, Strategic Communication, and Engagement to Inform Policy and Implementation: This sub-AoW aims to ensure that research findings are effectively communicated and used to influence policy and practice. Key activities include conducting evidence syntheses, developing learning agendas, curating a resource hub, identifying evidence uptake pathways, and engaging in strategic communication and advocacy efforts.

Capacity Strengthening and Institutional Change: This sub-AoW focuses on building the capacity of individuals and institutions to conduct and utilize GESI research. This

involves providing training and support to researchers, developing resources, fostering communities of practice, and advocating for institutional changes that promote GESI integration within CGIAR and partner organizations.

7. The transition team to start implementing the research and work will be constituted of the DG appointed gender research coordinators (GRCs), one each, of all the centers, with Nicoline de Haan as interim director and Vivian Polar (CIP) as deputy director. The area-of-work leads still need to be identified. The team will have a meeting in late January to finalize the activities and the management arrangements.

On youth

8. On **youth**, the Accelerator has a specific sub-area of work dedicated to **youth**. This builds upon work already done such as a background paper on youth entitled: [Youth in international agricultural research for development: a background paper](#).
9. This will be accompanied by a position paper on youth, which will state that the GENDER Impact Platform recommends the CGIAR to recognize **youth as agents of change in agri-food systems**. This position is rooted in the understanding that young people, representing the largest generation in history, are pivotal in shaping social and economic development, including the future of agriculture. CGIAR emphasizes the **importance of investing in and enhancing the potential of youth** as a vital aspect of its agricultural research for development initiatives. This makes youth an ongoing priority target group and a key development partner for CGIAR.

Key aspects of GENDER's position on youth:

- *Youth are not merely passive recipients of support but dynamic actors who drive agri-food development and transformation processes.*
- *Meaningful engagement of youth in AR4D offers an opportunity to equip them with resources to navigate challenges, prepare them for future roles in agriculture, and support the transition to sustainable, equitable and resilient agri-food systems.*
- *Youth is not only about age.* Youth, as a relational concept and status, is also about transitions within a life course; social and institutionalized relations, interdependencies, inequalities and power relations within and across generations; and an identity and cultural resource for action and social navigation.
- *Recognizing the heterogeneity of youth is crucial.* This involves understanding that young women and men, as well as youth from diverse social groups, abilities and contexts, may face different opportunities and constraints and experience programs differently, therefore require tailored initiatives to address their specific circumstances. Special attention needs to be paid to gender as a major differentiator that shapes different pathways for young men and young women.
- *Moving beyond the "NEET" (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) label, as identified in the 2030 CGIAR strategy, is advisable in an agrifood system*

context, in recognition of youth's diversity and diversified livelihoods. Else, there is a risk of overlooking young people who are engaged in informal agricultural or care work or combine education and training with agrifood activities. The focus should be on understanding how structural factors influence the lives and livelihoods of young people and how they can contribute to positive changes in agri-food systems.

- *Theoretical and methodological frameworks for understanding youth in AR4D need to be developed further.* Existing frameworks that place youth in a perspective of transitions along a life course, in a (relational) generational perspective, approach youth engagement via a perspective of youth agency and social navigation or via positive youth development can enhance AR4D and programming.

On impact assessment

10. On the importance of conducting [causal] **impact assessments** to inform solutions to close gender gaps in agri-food systems. CGIAR research on gender has substantially contributed to a better understanding of women's role and status in agri-food systems. It has contributed to a better understanding of how to measure women's empowerment in agriculture, of the determinants and constraints of technology adoption among women farmers, of the role of gender and social norms, and of the reasons why women are more affected by climate, among others.
11. This body of evidence is crucial for advancing to the next stage, identifying promising and effective solutions (and those that do not work) to close gender gaps and enable women overcoming the constraints they face. This move requires strengthening empirical practices: ensuring accurate measurement of treatments and outcomes, establishing unbiased causal relationships, and generating policy-relevant recommendations. This also requires strengthening the culture of how impact evidence is understood and used across CGIAR. To promote the use of causal impact to identify promising and effective solutions (and also those that do not work), we aim to improve the integration of gender into these assessments by identifying specific indicators where heterogeneous impacts are expected (e.g., adoption, income, and yield), and indicators where an impact is expected only among women (e.g., drudgery), or particularly related to women's empowerment (e.g., intrinsic or instrumental agency); and by accurately integrating this into the design of the impact assessments. We aim to foster collaborative research across gender, impact assessment, and other relevant fields to enhance capacity-building, knowledge exchange, and transdisciplinary; and promote the use of causal impact assessments and mixed-methods research designs, recognizing the complementarity of quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as the synergy between monitoring and impact assessment.