TECHNICAL REPORT

Gender Action Learning System Assessment: Insights on how Inclusive Innovations Shape Gender Transformative Outcomes

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Acknowledgments

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We also recognize the continued support and collaboration of national and regional partners, whose engagement ensures that the solutions developed are responsive to local needs, strengthen innovation systems, and contribute to building more resilient agrifood systems.

About CGIAR Scaling for Impact (S4I) program

Scaling for Impact (S4I) is a CGIAR program (2025–2030) that tests, refines, and scales innovations in food, land, and water systems. It works to align those innovations with stakeholder needs to achieve transformative impact.

Website: https://www.cgiar.org/cgiar-research-porfolio-2025-2030/scaling-for-impact/

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Front cover photo: Farm and fish harvesting (*photo:* Detour)
Back cover photo: Rice farmers divide young rice plants and replant in flooded rice fields in Southeast Asia (*photo:* Shutterstock)

Acronyms

AfDB – African Development Bank

AU- African Union

BOA - Bank of Agriculture

BMGF - Bill and Melinda Gate Foundation

BOD - Biological Oxygen Demand

CGIAR - Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African States

ICSAN – Industrial Cassava Stakeholders Association of Nigeria

IFAD - International Fund for Agricultural Development

MELIA - Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Impact Assessment

NAFDAC - National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control

Summary

This report presents the results of a learning assessment of the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology, implemented under the CGIAR Scaling for Impact (S4I) Program in Malawi. The study evaluates and seeks to understand how inclusive innovations through the application of GALS as a transformative methodology contribute to gender-transformative outcomes, particularly in the context of scaling climate-smart agricultural practices and innovations such as conservation agriculture and irrigation technology.

Purpose and Approach

The assessment focused on the inclusivity and equity of innovation uptake, targeting marginalized groups—especially women and youth reached through training and adoption practices. MERAMO Consulting, as a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) partner, led the intervention using GALS to foster safe spaces for adopting and scaling climate-smart agriculture innovations. The study utilized both quantitative (household surveys) and qualitative (Most Significant Change stories) methods, engaging 1417 participants across two zones in Malawi. This sample is a representation of over 4095 households that participated in the implementation of GALS under the Ukama Ustawi Initiative in 2024.

Key Findings

Widespread Adoption and Knowledge Sharing: 76% of respondents reported regular GALS review sessions, and all trained participants continued to engage in GALS activities after formal training. Peer-to-peer dissemination was strong, with meetings, storytelling, and training sessions as primary channels.
Empowerment and Gender Transformation: The methodology led to significant improvements in visioning, gender equality awareness, economic empowerment, and problem-solving. Notably, 87% reported gains in vision and goal setting on climate-smart agricultural practices, 64% in gender equality addressing normative barriers and exclusionary practices, and 62% in financial management. **Community and Household Impact:** There was a marked increase in joint decision-making (74–82% across domains like finance, farming practices, and education), with women's participation and leadership in the community rising sharply. Gender-based violence decreased, and asset control became more equitable.
Environmental Sustainability: High adoption rates were observed for climate-smart practices—96% for manure application and tree planting, 95% for crop rotation, and 93% for irrigation—demonstrating GALS' effectiveness in promoting sustainable agriculture.
Institutional Uptake: While household and community-level adoption was robust, only 24% reported organizational implementation of GALS, highlighting a gap in institutional integration.
Recommendations: The report proposes key actions to enhance GALS' effectiveness and sustainability for innovation adoption and scaling:

- **Strengthen capacity building and mentorship** for champions and facilitators.
- **Integrate GALS with economic empowerment initiatives** (e.g., savings groups, business skills).
- **Improve monitoring, evaluation, and communication** to document and share success stories.
- **Embed GALS in local governance and community structures** for broader institutionalization.
- **Advocate for greater organizational adoption** within government departments and partner institutions.

Conclusion

The GALS approach has delivered transformative impacts in Malawi, advancing gender equality, household agency, and climate resilience. The study underscores the need for continued capacity building, stronger institutional partnerships, and integration of GALS into broader development strategies to sustain and scale its benefits within local governance and community structures. It further creates entry points for embedding GESI within Area of Work 2 (AoW2) innovations under the flagship program for inclusive adoption and scaling outcomes.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The CGIAR Scaling for Impact Program (S4I) seeks to enhance the uptake of technological, social, policy, and institutional innovations by strengthening the enabling environment for scaling. The program integrates research and practical scaling strategies to accelerate the uptake of innovations that improve food security, reduce poverty, promote gender equality, support climate adaptation, and ensure environmental sustainability. Through Area of Work 3 (AoW3), the program emphasizes inclusivity and equity, ensuring that marginalized groups, particularly women and youth, benefit meaningfully from innovations. MERAMO Consulting was engaged as a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) partner to implement an intervention in Malawi focused on using the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) in scaling innovations. Within this framework, the focus is on AoW3 - the Enabling Environment Lab, which addresses systemic barriers that prevent innovations from scaling equitably and responsibly. This includes policy constraints, market and institutional gaps, and social or normative barriers that limit inclusion (see Fig 1), particularly for marginalized groups such as women and youth, so that scaling innovations leads to transformative social change.

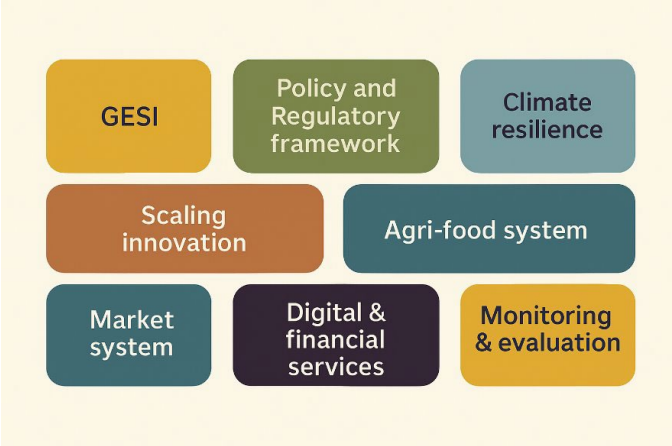


Figure 1. Core pillars that help strengthen the enabling environment barriers for scaling innovations under AoW3.
Source: author's creation

Building on the implementation of GALS phase 1 in Malawi under the CGIAR Initiative for Diversification in East and Southern Africa (Ukama Ustawi), this learning assessment under S4I was aimed at deepening our understanding of transformative outcomes as highlighted in the GALS success stories. This means the assessment moved from anecdotal success stories to systematically assessing sustainability, ownership, and transformation post UU Phase 1 implementation, as well as institutional uptake. One of the main outcomes has been on how safe spaces can be created for the adoption and scaling of climate-smart agriculture practices such as conservation agriculture and irrigation.

1.2 GALS as a Transformative Approach in Scaling Innovations

The GALS methodology empowers adult and young males and females who are engaged in income and agricultural activities across food, land, and water systems to facilitate more equitable gender and power relations. It promotes fair access to and control over household resources and assets, while supporting the effective utilization of benefits to strengthen interventions and reduce vulnerabilities to shocks. Through GALS, participants gain and share knowledge, skills, and capacities, while cultivating passion, commitment, and the determination to achieve livelihood diversification through the adoption of sustainable practices designed to support improved income and nutrition.
At its core, GALS applies principles of inclusion to enhance income, food, and nutrition security for vulnerable people in a gender-equitable manner (Reemer and Makanza, 2014). By guiding individuals and households to create and take ownership of achievable visions, it nurtures agency and collective responsibility (Enokenwa Baa et al., 2024). The methodology also promotes joint decision-making and cooperation between couples and household members, resulting in the meaningful sharing of gender roles that were traditionally assigned exclusively to either men or women (Farnworth *et al.*, 2017). As a fit-for-purpose methodology, GALS can be adapted to diverse cultural and organizational contexts across multiple sectors, including agriculture, health, education, and finance, where pathways for innovations are designed and scaled (Mayoux, 2014).
This learning assessment study builds on the implementation of GALS under the Ukama Ustawi work in Malawi, which followed a cascading training approach. The process under Phase 1 began with the training of 40 GALS Champions, followed by the preparation of household trainers, who subsequently led sessions with individual households and smallholder farmers practicing conservation agriculture.

Box 1 presents a comparative description of what UU delivered versus what S4I adds in terms of value for embedding GALS.

Community review meetings were subsequently held, bringing together over 4000-GALS participants to reflect and share experiences. Given this process, it was timely and appropriate to conduct a GALS learning assessment study that would not only assess outcomes at the individual, household, and community levels but also examine the approach's scalability in other contexts under the S4I program for solution tracks.

The study, therefore, explored the use of GALS as both a methodology and a tool to facilitate inclusive participation, agency, institutional integration and strengthening, and the tracking of power dynamics to track transformative change for smallholder farmers. As a tool, GALS will be implemented under the S4I program and other CGIAR projects with a strong research focus using the adapted GALS for gender-transformative research (GALS4GTR) for co-designing, implementation, and monitoring with communities, innovation adoption, and scaling (see Figure 2). This would close a critical gap in learning assessment studies on key S4I outcomes and MELIA expectations.

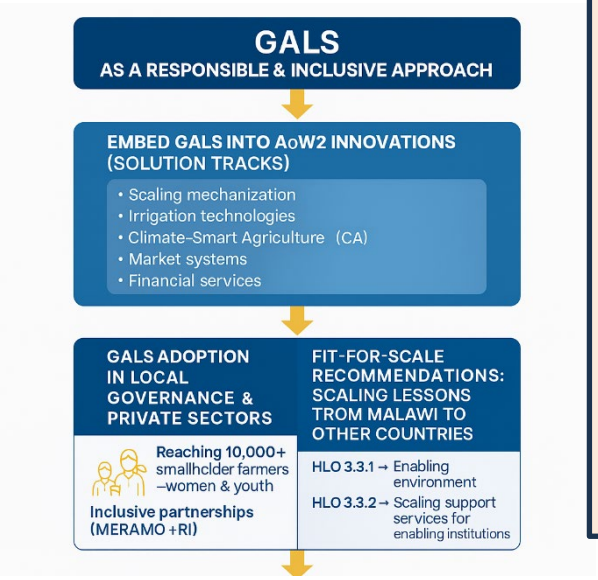


Figure 2. A Framework of GALS as a responsible approach to scaling innovations.

Box 1. Embedding GALS into Scaling for Impact Program – Building on UU GALS Implementation to support AoW2 innovations.

GALS Phase 1: ***Under UU*** in Malawi, the focus was on delivering the following:

- Reaching 4000 smallholder farmers through GALS training on CSA practices such as CA adoption (surpassed target).
- Creating safe spaces in households and communities for decision-making around the adoption of CA
- Ensuring diffusion of GALS knowledge through GALS Champions (mostly traditional leaders, extension services, natural resource committees, lead farmers)
- Prioritize women and youth in the training for CA adoption

Level of participation	Men	Women	Achieved target
GALS Champions	21	19	
Household trainers	149	255	
Household members	997	2654	
Total	1167	2928	4095

S4I program: Under the S4I program, GALS focuses on:

- Drawing lessons and evidence from GALS phase 1 under UU through a learning assessment study: using mixed-method design (focus of this report)
- Embed GALS as a responsible and inclusive approach in AoW2 innovations (***solution tracks***) such as on scaling mechanization, irrigation technologies, CSA practices (CA), market systems, and financial services
- GALS adoption in local governance institutions and the private sectors
- Designing fit-for-scale AoW2 solution track recommendations that scale lessons from Malawi into other countries

This approach is grounded through inclusive partnerships such as MERAMO and Responsible Innovations, to reach over 10.000 smallholder farmers, specifically women and youth, in inclusive innovation adoption. The goal is to support the S4I program achieve key outcomes on i) enabling environment diagnostics (HLO 3.3.1), ii) scaling support services for enabling environments and institutions (HLO 3.3.2), and iii) science-policy partnership interfaces for responsible scaling (HLO 3.3.3).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study was to:

- Conduct a learning assessment study using the Most Significant Change (MSC) and the GALS4TR methodologies on innovation adoption outcomes (specifically conservation agriculture and irrigation) for participants involved in GALS implementation under the Ukama Ustawi Initiative.

Specific objectives were:

- To draw lessons on how conservation agriculture and other climate-smart agriculture (CSA) practices can scale through GALS.
- To show evidence of transformative change and equitable scaling potential that supports the S4I inclusive scaling pathways.

The study was therefore grounded in the four-GALS steps used during the implementation phase, where participants created safe spaces for discussions. Figure 3 presents the different GALS steps.

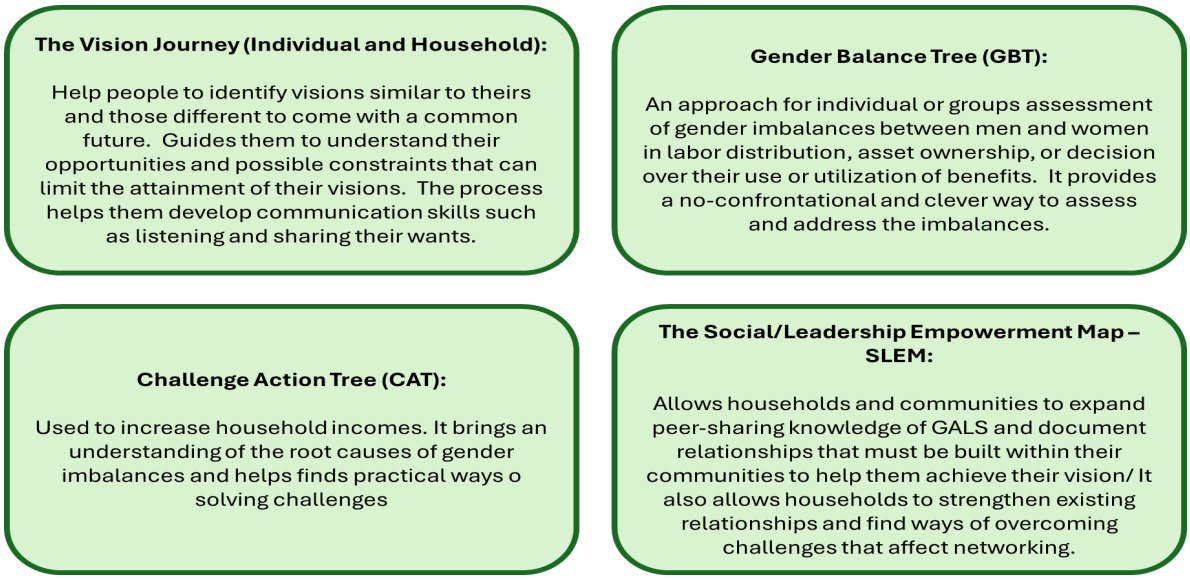


Figure 3. Diagram showing the four steps of GALS for inclusive innovation adoption as implemented in Ukama Ustawi Initiative (*Source:* author's creation)

The different steps are identifying goals through individual and shared visions (step 1: visioning), exploring gender roles and their differentiated impacts (step 2: gender balance tree), navigating solutions for positive and inclusive outcomes (step 3: challenge action tree), and exploring networks for social empowerment (step 4: social/leadership empowerment map). The assessment provides evidence of innovation adoption using GALS for transformative outcomes.

2. Methodology

2.1 Study Location and Activity Plan

The GALS Phase 1 was implemented in 2024 across two zones in Malawi under the UU initiative: the Nkhotakota Zone, which covers the districts of Dowa, Nkhotakota, and Salima; and the Balaka Zone, which includes the districts of Balaka, Machinga, and Zomba, reaching 4095 people (1167 men and 2928 women). The targeted divisions were the Salima Agricultural Development Divisions (SLADD) and the Machinga Agricultural Development Divisions (MADD). In SLADD, the assessment participants were drawn from the communities of Mwansambo, Linga, and Zidyana of Nkhotakota district; Chinguluwe of Salima district, and Chipeni of Dowa district. In MADD, the participants came from Herbert and Lemu communities of Balaka district; Matandika and Malula of Machinga district, and Songani of Zomba district. This study was conducted under the S4I program and maintained the same study context and participants as in UU GALS Phase 1. The assessment was conducted between October and December 2025, as highlighted in the Table 1 implementation plan.

Table 1. Activity plan for the GALS assessment study

Activity	Period of Implementation		
	October	November	December
Training of GALS Champions for the story collection (evidence), survey design and management process			
Conduct interviews for the collection of MSC stories, and surveys for evidence development			
Collection/analysis and mapping of MSC stories and surveys			
Field-level prioritization, compilation of MSC stories and emerging themes			
Consolidation and quantification of GALS impact stories and outcomes by domain and final analysis			
Final technical report			

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Questionnaires were designed, uploaded on Kobo Collect, and administered to 1417 participants (see Table 2 on gender breakdown). The household questionnaire was administered to 1,417 participants, including 1,111 women and 306 men, with women representing 78 percent. These respondents were drawn from the 4095 participants under GALS Phase 1 to share evidence from the GALS application in innovation adoption.

Table 2. Survey participants by category

Category of participation Table 2: Survey participants by category	Number of people		
	Women	Men	Total
Champions	6	10	16
Household trainers	215	103	318
Household members	890	193	1083
Total	**1111**	**306**	**1417**

The respondents had an average age of 37, ranging between 17 and 78 years. They comprised GALS champions, household trainers, and household members. The questionnaire focused on aspects related to social and institutional transformation, visioning and planning, participation and leadership, financial planning and economic empowerment, shared gender roles and benefits to assets, and decision-making. The household questionnaire data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel, with the analysis primarily conducted through frequency and cross-tabulation analyses.

The collection of Most Significant Change (MSC) stories for the qualitative data approach involved 268 people (163 women and 105 men) from the same communities where the household questionnaire was administered. The stories were sourced from the GALS Champions, household trainers, and household members. The decision to employ MSC for GALS learning assessment is based on characteristics that make it appropriate. MSC is better suited to capturing lessons learned from GALS because conventional M&E tools do not provide sufficient data to make sense of GALS's household-level impacts and foster learning diffusion (Davies, 2005). The active engagement of all GALS Champions helped ensure broad participation and address potential challenges in maintaining the quality of the collected stories and subsequent story analysis. These MSC stories were analyzed and grouped into strategic transformative outcomes linked to the MELIA-A indicators on agency, empowerment, social cohesion, and transformation (See Figure 4) and presented in this GALS impact study.

Ethical standards that include confidentiality, getting informed consent, and respect for participant safety and integrity were strictly observed throughout data collection and processing.

Figure 4. Diagram showing high-level outcomes on social norms or community attitudes using GALS as a transformative approach

2.3 Roles of the GALS Champions

The champions played a vital role in the impact assessment by leading the process of story mobilization, collection, and analysis. This was to ensure the knowledge co-production and co-creation follow a bottom-up approach guided and owned by the communities whose stories for impact were being captured.
Their primary roles and responsibilities included:

a) Developing their own story of change to set an example and guide others
b) Convening a meeting with the 10 household trainers they have trained and mentored under the UU GALS implementation phase
c) Providing space for each trainer to share their personal stories of change during the meeting
d) Listening attentively and identifying five outstanding stories that best illustrate progress and transformation
e) Requesting the household trainers to recommend five households that achieved significant changes
f) Following up to document 10 selected stories in detail
g) Taking necessary photographs and videos to include in the stories chosen for publication

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 GALS Knowledge Sharing at Household and Community Levels

There was greater GALS activity at the household level than at other levels, underscoring the sustainability of the approach. The assessment found that household members independently shared and applied GALS knowledge within their households and extended it to their wider communities. This organic dissemination shows that the GALS methodology is not only highly transferable but also self-sustaining, enabling continued sharing of knowledge and uptake of climate-smart agricultural practices beyond the life of the intervention.

A total of 1,078 respondents (76%) reported that there were regular GALS review or lesson sharing sessions (specifically focusing on irrigation, market dynamics, conservation agriculture, and access to agricultural inputs) in their communities. This indicates strong follow-up mechanisms and continuous adaptive learning within most communities. The regular review sessions were essential for reinforcing GALS principles, tracking progress, and/or sharing experiences to enable households and communities to adapt their action plans and visions on practicing sustainable agriculture. Although the UU project was no longer active within the communities with no external motivation coming through interventions, all 1,417 survey respondents continued to engage in or facilitate GALS activities after completing their formal training in 2024 - demonstrating strong adoption and uptake of the GALS methodology for CSA, such as conservation agriculture and irrigation.

Further analysis shows that the participants used a variety of approaches to share or facilitate GALS activities within their communities. The most common modes were meetings reported by 28% of the respondents, followed closely by storytelling (27%) and training sessions (24%). These three methods together account for nearly 80% of all GALS dissemination efforts, indicating that community engagement and interpersonal communication are the primary channels for voluntarily spreading the methodology, as presented in Figure 5.

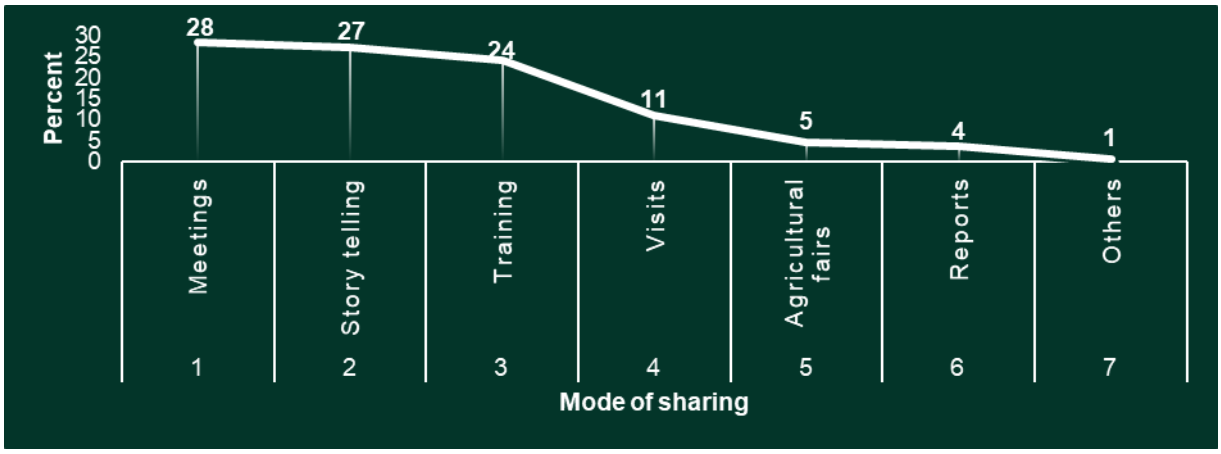


Figure 5. Ways of sharing GALS within households and communities for inclusive adoption and scaling

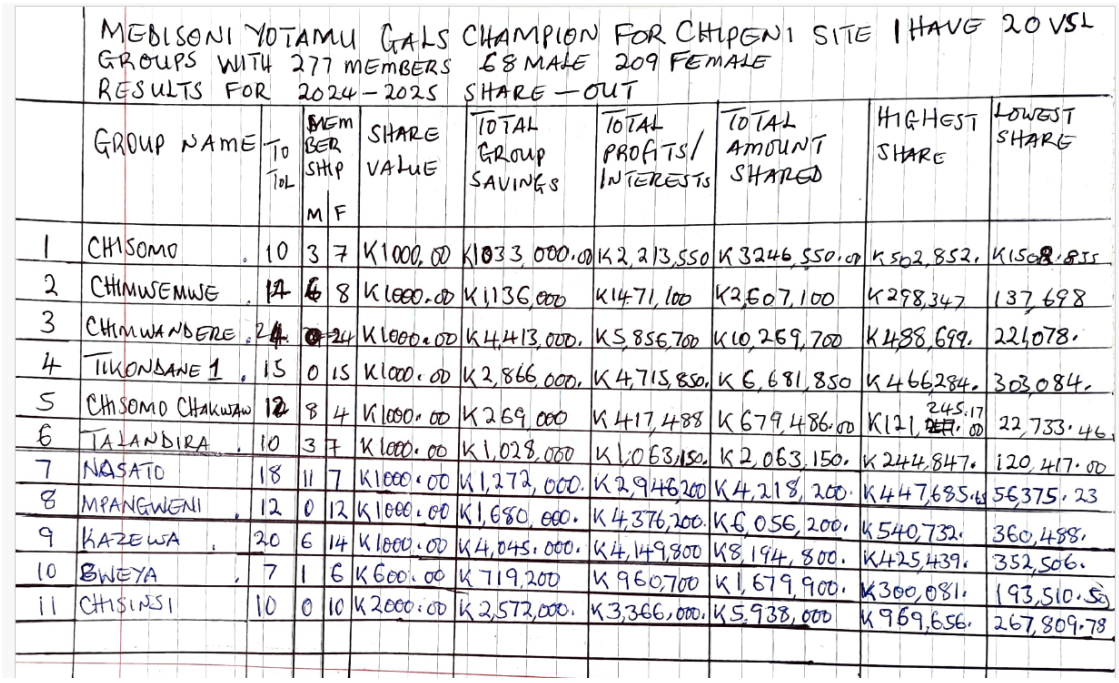
Individually, 397 participants (28%) facilitated more than six-GALS activities, reflecting a high level of commitment and leadership within their communities. Additionally, 52% facilitated three activities each, indicating broad community-level participation and consistent application of GALS skills. This finding highlights both the scalability and strong peer-to-peer diffusion of the GALS methodology for creating an enabling environment for the adoption of CSA.

3.1.1 Spread and impact of GALS learning across households and communities

The data demonstrates strong sustained engagement with GALS after initial training, reflecting the methodology's effectiveness in motivating continued learning, practice, and community interaction. The survey respondents reported a total of 17,666 people as benefiting from the GALS methodology, comprising 8,881 direct beneficiaries (those who were trained or reached directly) and 8,785 indirect beneficiaries (those reached through peer sharing and cascading). This figure surpasses the envisaged targets at the time of GALS implementation.
The commonest groups through which GALS was shared include the village savings and loans (VSLs) and farmers' groups such as cooperatives, associations, farmers' clubs, and business groups. While cooperatives and VSL groups were not directly targeted during the 2024-GALS implementation, the findings highlight the transfer of knowledge through GALS champions. This assessment investigated the influence of GALS on these groups.

The findings show notable progress in strengthening institutional practices, particularly in relation to inclusion and gender balance. Sixty-five percent of respondents reported that their groups had become more inclusive, indicating that decision-making spaces were now opening to wider participation, including women, youth, and marginalized members. Similarly, two-thirds of the respondents (66%) observed improvements in gender balance, with better representation of both men and women in leadership and governance structures. This reflects deliberate efforts within the groups to promote gender equality.

Half of the respondents perceived their groups as becoming more transparent, attributing this to increased inclusion and improved gender balance. With a wider range of voices present in meetings, committees, and other decision-making platforms, decisions are more likely to be discussed openly and taken collectively. This broader participation strengthens accountability and reduces opportunities for non-transparent practices. For example, in Chipeni – Dowa district, GALS training was later conducted across 11 VSL groups with a total number of 277 members (68 male and 209 females) by a GALS Champion. Figure 6 shows how Medisoni transferred GALS knowledge across VSLs with the aim of improving inclusivity, economic benefits, and accountability. Knowledge gained helped them improve their profits and savings with more interest in GALS visioning to be adopted by other cooperatives and VSL groups. His goal is to conduct more training in 2026 while targeting water user associations for an inclusive vision and actionable outcomes on water management.



MEDISONI YOTAMU GALS CHAMPION FOR CHIPENI SITE I HAVE 20 VSL GROUPS WITH 277 MEMBERS 68 MALE 209 FEMALE
RESULTS FOR 2024–2025 SHARE–OUT

	GROUP NAME	TOTAL	MEMBERSHIP M	MEMBERSHIP F	SHARE VALUE	TOTAL GROUP SAVINGS	TOTAL PROFITS/ INTERESTS	TOTAL AMOUNT SHARED	HIGHEST SHARE	LOWEST SHARE
1	CHISOMO	10	3	7	K1000.00	K1033,000.00	K2,213,550	K3246,550.00	K502,852.	K150[illegible].85
2	CHIMWEMWE	14	6	8	K1000.00	K1,136,000	K1471,100	K2,607,100	K298,347	137,698
3	CHIMWANDERE	24	0	24	K1000.00	K4,413,000.	K5,856,700	K10,269,700	K488,699.	226,078.
4	TIKONDANE 1	15	0	15	K1000.00	K2,866,000.	K4,715,850.	K6,681,850	K466,284.	303,084.
5	CHISOMO CHAKWAW	12	8	4	K1000.00	K269,000	K417,488	K679,486.00	K121,245.17	22,733.46
6	TALANDIRA	10	3	7	K1000.00	K1,028,000	K1,063,150.	K2,063,150.	K244,847.	120,417.00
7	NASATO	18	11	7	K1000.00	K1,272,000.	K2,946,200	K4,218,200	K447,685.45	56,375.23
8	MPANGWENI	12	0	12	K1000.00	K1,680,000.	K4,376,200.	K6,056,200.	K540,732.	360,488.
9	KAZEWA	20	6	14	K1000.00	K4,045,000.	K4,149,800	K8,194,800.	K425,439.	352,506.
10	BWEYA	7	1	6	K600.00	K719,200	K960,700	K1,679,900.	K300,081.	193,510.55
11	CHISINSI	10	0	10	K2000.00	K2,572,000.	K3,366,000.	K5,938,000	K969,656.	267,809.78

Figure 6. VSL groups in Chipeni who received GALS training through a GALS champion for knowledge diffusion (*photo:* Amon Chinyophiro)

The high participation reinforces the potential for behavioral change, peer learning, and broader diffusion of GALS tools within communities, making it appropriate for innovation such as climate-smart agriculture transfer. The participants were involved in GALS-related community activities, including experience-sharing meetings. Figure 7 illustrates high levels of participation in GALS–related community activities among respondents. The figure indicates that a substantial proportion of participants were actively involved in activities such as experience-sharing meetings and other collective GALS processes, suggesting strong engagement beyond one-off training events. This level of participation reflects both the accessibility of GALS tools and their relevance to community priorities.

High participation is significant because it creates conditions for behavioral change, peer learning, and social diffusion of GALS principles within communities. Regular engagement in group-based activities allows participants to internalize concepts related to gender relations, joint decision-making, and household planning, and to share these practices informally with others. As a result, GALS functions not only as an individual empowerment tool but also as a community-level innovation, making it particularly well-suited for supporting the uptake of practices such as climate-smart agriculture and inclusive natural resource management. Overall, the figure demonstrates that GALS implementation achieved meaningful community reach, which is a critical precondition for sustained social and institutional change.

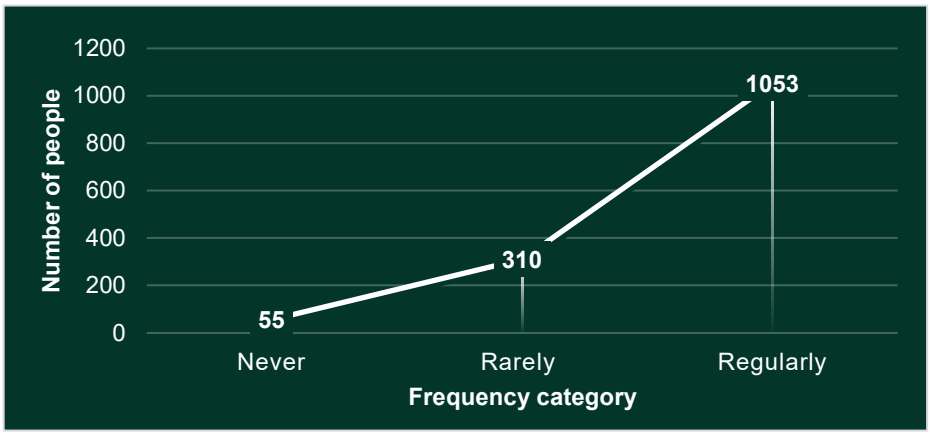


Figure 7. Demonstrating the frequency of participation in GALS-related community activities

3.2 Knowledge Gained from GALS Training

Evidence from this impact study shows that the GALS methodology delivered strong results across all the assessed domains, particularly in personal visioning, gender transformative awareness, and economic empowerment. Specifically, the results (as captured in Table 3 below) indicate that participants gained the most knowledge in vision and goal setting, where 87% of the assessment sample reported improvement. This reflects the strong emphasis GALS places on helping rural people articulate and plan for their long-term aspirations within the agriculture value chain.

The findings further reveal that 64% of participants reported gaining knowledge about ways of improving gender equality and power relations through the use of the gender balance tree, which allows them to explore gender imbalances in a non-conflicting way. An indication that the GALS approach is highly effective in helping people to understand how gender roles, decision-making patterns, and power imbalances affect their lives. The assessment further highlighted that participants were learning to recognize unfair practices, challenge harmful norms, and promote more equal sharing of responsibilities, resources, and opportunities within their households and communities. All entry points for addressing hidden gender barriers to scaling innovations uptake in communities.

In terms of financial management and economic empowerment, 62% of the participants gained knowledge, while 50% reported improvement in their problem-solving skills. This indicates that the GALS methodology strengthens people's ability to manage money, plan, and grow their income, and make informed financial decisions. At the same time, it builds practical skills in the identification and analysis of challenges as well as finding solutions, prompting them to take the necessary actions. Together, these improvements demonstrate that GALS enhances both economic capability and everyday decision-making.

There were meaningful improvements in leadership and collective action reported by 41% of the respondents, and communication and conflict resolution skills reported by 40% of the respondents. These are essential skills in GALS because they help individuals to work together, take initiative, and manage disagreements constructively. However, leadership and communication skills may need additional coaching and mentoring to ensure deeper learning and confidence among the participants. Table 3 summarizes the learning outcomes reported by the GALS participants.

Table 3. Participant learning outcomes from GALS

Knowledge gained from GALS N=1417	Count	Percent of sample
Vision and goal setting	1231	87
Gender equality and power relations	913	64
Financial management and economic empowerment	872	62
Problem solving	710	50
Leadership and collective action	585	41
Communication and conflict resolution	572	40

3.3 Understanding the Visions Achieved by GALS Participants

The common visions articulated by participants following the GALS training reflect not only livelihood priorities but also important shifts in gender relations, agency, and decision-making power at household and community levels. The visions demonstrate how GALS has supported participants, particularly women, to articulate longer-term aspirations, challenge traditional gender norms, and engage more actively in planning for economic resilience.
The fact that 50% (see Table 4) of participants prioritized owning or building a permanent house is significant from a gender perspective. Improved housing is not only a material asset but also a marker of security, dignity, and social status. For women, particularly those in male-dominated decision-making contexts, articulating housing as a shared household goal reflects increased voice in strategic decisions over asset accumulation. The linkage participants make between improved housing and agricultural productivity suggests greater recognition of women's roles in farming and household income generation, moving beyond norms that frame women primarily as subsistence producers rather than contributors to asset growth.

Table 4. Common visions developed and achieved by GALS participants

Common Visions Observed	Count	Percent of sample
Livestock	719	51
Permanent house	714	50
Owning a successful business	515	36
Irrigation	497	35
Food security	455	32
Others	143	10

The emphasis on livestock ownership (51%) further highlights gender-transformative shifts. Traditionally, livestock, especially larger animals, are controlled by men, even when women contribute substantial labour. The prominence of livestock in participants' visions suggests growing acknowledgement of women's rights to own, manage, and benefit from productive assets. Where women are actively involved in defining these visions, this signals movement toward more equitable control over livelihood resources.

Visions related to business ownership (36%) represent a clear gender-transformative outcome. Women's aspirations to engage in agribusiness, transport services, or other enterprises challenge prevailing norms that limit women's economic participation to unpaid or low-return activities. Through GALS, participants appear to have expanded their sense of what is socially acceptable and economically possible for women, reinforcing women's identity as entrepreneurs and income earners. This diversification of livelihoods also enhances women's bargaining power within households, contributing to more balanced decision-making.

Similarly, the strong emphasis on irrigation (35%) and food security (32%) reflects women's central roles in food production and household nutrition. By identifying irrigation as a priority, participants—particularly women—are signaling a shift from coping-oriented strategies toward proactive investment in productivity and climate resilience. This marks a departure from gender norms that often exclude women from decisions about technology adoption and resource-intensive investments. GALS has supported women to engage with technical and strategic aspects of farming, strengthening their agency in shaping agricultural systems.

Overall, the visions reveal communities that are economically constrained yet highly motivated, with women increasingly visible as planners, decision-makers, and agents of change. The GALS process has enabled participants to move beyond short-term coping and articulate collective, forward-looking visions that integrate asset building, income diversification, and resilience to climate and economic shocks. These outcomes align closely with gender-transformative change, as they reflect shifts in power relations, norms, and roles, rather than solely improvements in material conditions. A female farmer discussed how she was able to implement irrigation based on her GALS vision journey and how these shifts translate into tangible actions. It shows how GALS can catalyze changes in confidence, decision-making authority, and access to productive resources—key foundations for building resilient, inclusive agricultural communities.

3.4 Most Significant Changes Reported

One of the main objectives of the GALS methodology is to create safe spaces where women, youth, and other marginalized groups can express their needs, interests, and visions for a sustainable future. This process builds their agency, especially confidence and decision-making capabilities, through shared understanding of challenges and opportunities. The assessment of participants' confidence in engaging in household and community decision-making processes shows positive results. A combined total of 94% of respondents reported being either confident (770, i.e., 54%) or very confident (564, representing 40%), indicating strong empowerment and improved self-efficacy resulting from the GALS interventions. A smaller group (73, i.e., 5%) felt somewhat confident, suggesting they were on a positive course but may still require additional mentorship support to utilize their confidence fully.

The findings therefore demonstrate that the GALS methodology has significantly strengthened participants' ability to influence decisions within their households and communities. These decisions were mostly related to improving agricultural productivity (sustainable practices) and other livelihoods diversification activities, such as businesses. Figure 8 summarizes the findings on confidence levels in decision-making after GALS training.

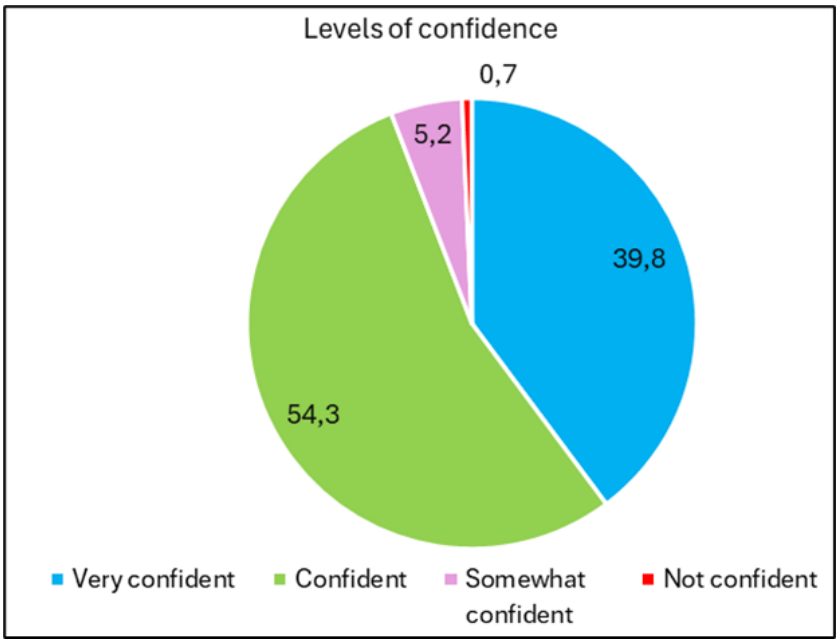


Figure 8. Levels of confidence as MSC after GALS training with over 1400 participants

3.4.2 Building agency and voice for effective decision-making at the household level

The assessment found consistently high levels of joint decision-making across the key household domains (see Figure 9). Respondents reported shared choices in finance (74%), farming practices (80%), irrigation adoption (80%), education (82%), food and nutrition (77%), and technology transfer (79%). Joint decisions were a demonstration of stronger gender awareness and collaboration – an outcome of the GALS training and related empowerment interventions.

When decisions are not made jointly, women are seen to lead more often than men, particularly in areas such as food and nutrition, education, and farming practices. Male-dominated decisions were the least common across all categories, signaling a shift away from traditional patriarchal decision structures. The patterns reflect meaningful progress toward gender-equitable household governance, with women increasingly influencing technical, resource-based, and everyday household decisions.

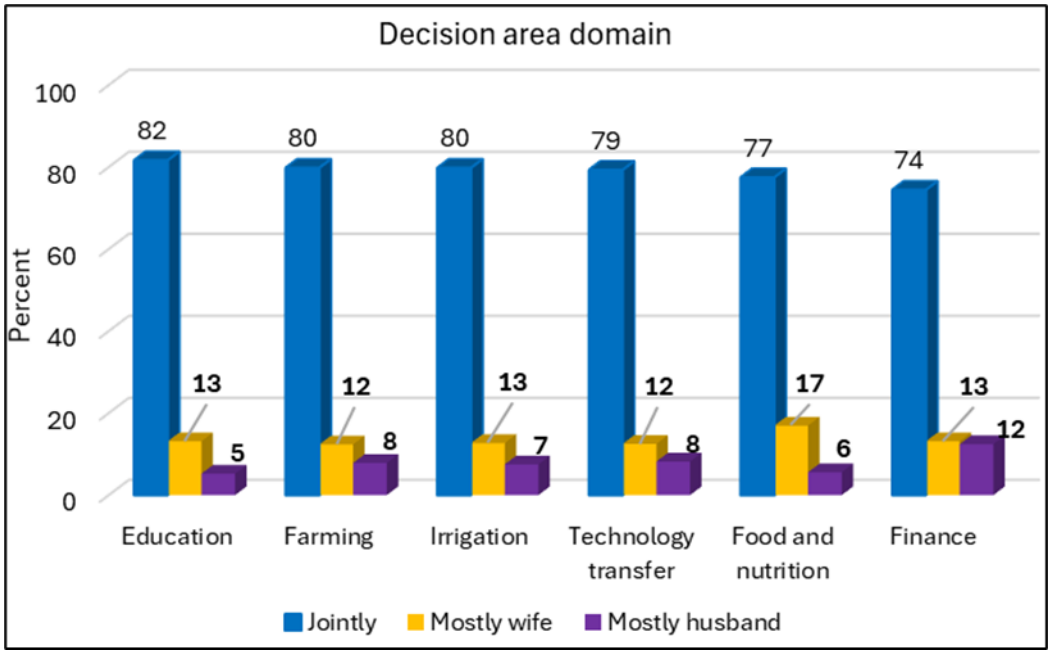


Figure 9. Showing statistics on agency and voice at the household level as key decision areas in innovation adoption

3.4.3 Building agency and voice for effective decision-making at the household level

The data shows significant positive shifts in community engagement across men, women, and youth. Many participants (98%) reported that women's participation in the community has increased the most, followed by men's (89%) and youth (83%), respectively. Engagements of previously excluded groups, such as women and youth, indicate a shift in cultural norms and practices and an increase in building agency in leadership for equitable outcomes.

In terms of decision-making, 98% of respondents reported an increase in women's involvement and leadership, while 88% observed greater participation by men, and 82% indicated that youth involvement in decision-making was also rising. The reported high increase among women reflects growing confidence, empowerment, and inclusion, likely influenced by the GALS methodology, social protection, and the political context, as 2024/2025 was a period of active campaigns in which women typically participate in large numbers. These trends may also signal a broader shift in gender norms. Table 5 summarizes the observed changes in participation and leadership among men, women, and youth.

Table 5. Percentage of Participation in the community by gender

Area of assessment	Group	Decreased	No change	Increased
General participation in the community N=1417	Men	4	8	89
	Women	1	1	98
	Youth	1	16	83
Involvement in leadership positions for decision-making in the community N=1417	Men	4	8	88
	Women	1	1	98
	Youth	1	17	82

3.4.4 Changes in gender roles and asset utilization

The assessment revealed strong positive gender-related shifts among participants, with 71% of survey respondents indicating that most households were distributing responsibilities more equally between men and women (see Figure 9. below). This suggests improved cooperation, reduced workload imbalances, and growing acceptance of joint decision-making.

Some respondents (69%) observed positive progress in resource ownership and control, such as land, livestock, income, or other productive assets. This finding suggests an important step toward women's and youth economic empowerment and reduced vulnerability.

A decrease in gender-based violence (GBV) was reported by 47% of the respondents, signaling a meaningful change in social norms, conflict resolution, and household peaceful coexistence – all important steps towards gender transformative change. Figure 10 shows the observed changes.

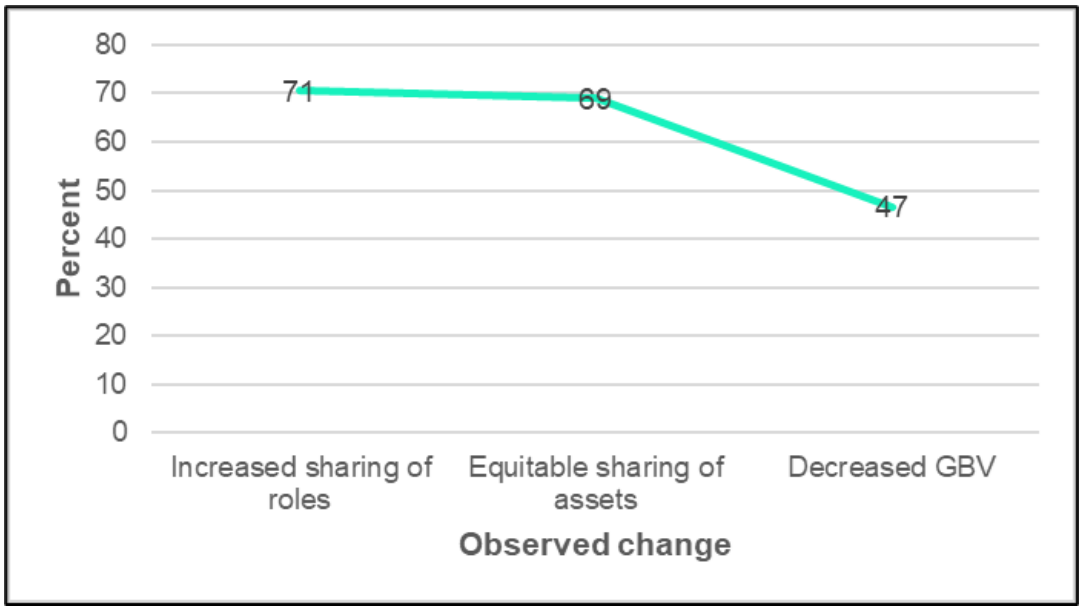


Figure 10. Observed changes in gender roles and asset sharing recorded by participants

3.5 Changes in Social Norms and Attitudes

The data demonstrates shifts in gender-related norms and attitudes among respondents following GALS implementation. The assessment was done across the four thematic areas, namely resource access and control; voice, respect, and participation; conflict and relationship dynamics; and economic and institutional norms. Over 90% of respondents reported a significant change in all the thematic areas, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Percentage change in social norms and attitudes

Changes in norms and attitudes (N=1417)	Positive change	No change	Negative change
Resource access and control (Agency)	95	1	4
Voice, respect, and participation (Empowerment)	93	2	5
Conflict and relationship dynamics	94	3	4
Economic and work norms	90	4	5

Over 95% of respondents reported a change in voice and respect for women. This indicates shifts towards more equitable communication, increased recognition of women's contributions, and greater participation in household and community spaces. Similarly, changes in conflict management suggest that households are adopting healthier ways of resolving disagreements, aligning with GALS training content that promotes dialogue, joint planning, empathy, and shared visioning. Changes in economic and gender division of labor indicate more balanced sharing of productive and domestic work, reducing burdens on women while increasing collaboration. It also indicates growing acceptance of women's economic roles, shifts in deep-rooted cultural norms and traditions.

3.6 Relevance and Applicability of GALS Content

The data, as captured in Figure 12 below, shows varied levels of perceived relevance across the four key GALS steps, with the vision journey rated highest (64%). This indicates that participants value the tool for planning personal, household, and community goals, registering future aspirations, and tracking progress. Its simplicity, practicality, and visual nature make it widely applicable and easy to use. For example, Davie Nkosi of Linga community in Nkhotakota made a vision journey during training to access tertiary education (see Figure 11). He represented his vision with a symbol of a graduation cap for his Master of Science degree. His actions included searching for and submitting scholarship proposals and seeking advice from institutions of higher learning. At the time of the assessment, he was in Italy pursuing a Master of Science degree.

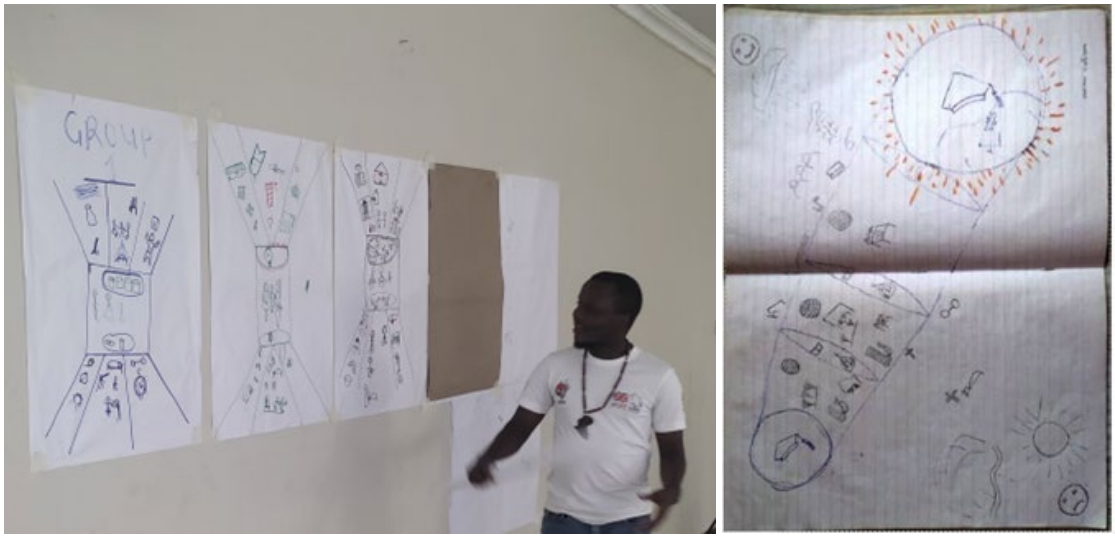


Figure 11. Davie making a GALS presentation (left) and his vision journey (right) on the adoption of CA practices (*photo:* Amon Chinyophiro)

The gender balance tree follows closely (62%) and was highlighted by respondents as a useful step to analyze and discuss the distribution of gender roles, responsibilities, and benefits. Its high relevance suggests it effectively facilitates and supports dialogue around gender roles and promotes fairness in workloads and resource control.

The challenge action tree was also considered useful by 56% of respondents, with participants indicating their need for additional facilitation of this step to fully grasp how to translate challenges into concrete, actionable, and sustainable steps (see Figure 12). While it remains an important tool for problem-solving and planning, it appears to be slightly less intuitive than the vision journey and the gender balance tree. This finding provides useful insight into the application of this tool.

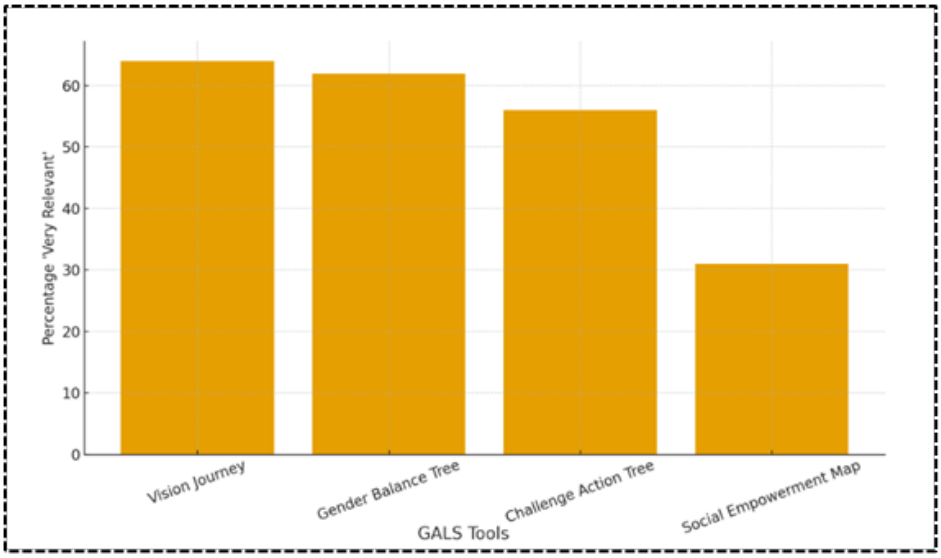


Figure 12. Relevance of GALS steps to participants following a ranking exercise

The Social Empowerment Map was the least popular tool, with only 31% of respondents finding it relevant. This suggests that the tool is either less understood, less applicable to the respondents' daily realities, or more complex to use without strong facilitation, as shown in Figure 13.

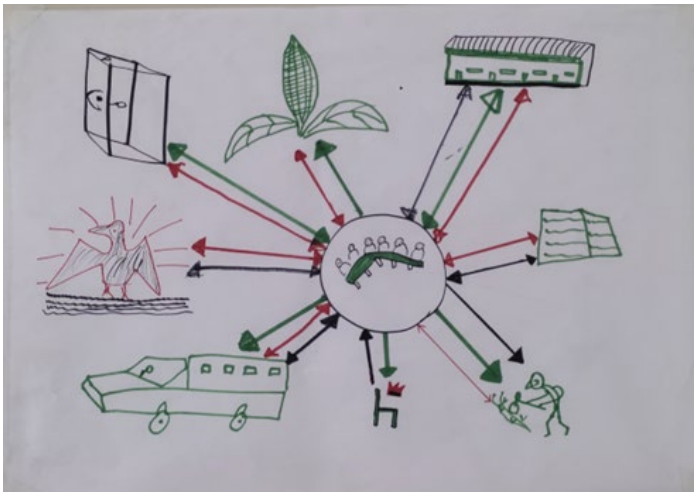


Figure 13. The Social Empowerment Map for building networks within the agricultural value chain
photo: Amon Chinyophiro

It may require adaptation or simplified facilitation approaches for better uptake. Participants still need to understand how this step of the tool can be beneficial in building and strengthening the networks needed to help solve their existing challenges. The step presents different actors in their network who can support them in building their social capital. It further describes power relations and, through color-coded arrows, the flow and direction of such relations. While this step highlights the importance of whom they can rely on, it may also present the challenge of how to build such networks, especially where the direction of flow is one-sided.
In terms of frequency of application of the GALS, the vision journey and gender balance tree were the most consistently used, indicating strong practicality and relevance to household planning and gender negotiations, as shown in Figure 14.

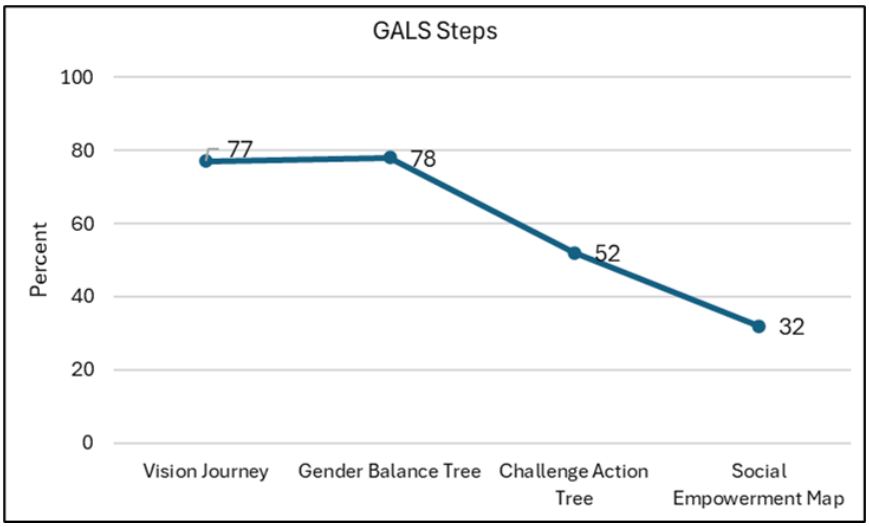


Figure 14. Relevance of GALS tools as depicted by participants for inclusive adoption of innovations

3.7 Environmental Management Adoption Practices

The implementation of GALS in 2024 sought to support the adoption and uptake of climate-smart practices such as conservation agriculture, mechanization, and irrigation technologies under the Ukama Ustawi initiative. The findings from the impact assessment indicate a high uptake of environmental management practices among respondents, with all practices recording adoption rates above 89%. As they pursue their visions, GALS participants particularly embrace good agricultural practices that address climate–related challenges, thereby improving yield productivity and, ultimately, household income.

A high proportion of respondents (93%) were practicing irrigation at different scales of operation, demonstrating strong efforts to improve water management, enhance crop productivity, and reduce reliance on rain-fed farming. Many of the respondents were using watering cans, while others managed to buy water pumps. Figure 15 shows a solar-powered irrigation system for Auster Chingoka, a GALS Champion (Auster is seen on the right directing water). This assessment showed irrigation as one of the main themes emerging from visioning and taking actionable solutions for improved crop productivity by most households. While participants acknowledged the importance of conservation agriculture, they highlighted the need for irrigation adoption that supports other climate-smart practices.

Figure 15. Participant implementing his vision journey using a solar-powered water pump for irrigation.
photo: Amon Chinyophiro

The widespread use of manure by 96% of respondents indicates strong adoption of climate-smart agriculture practices aimed at improving soil fertility. Farmers are investing in organic inputs such as decomposed animal manure and crop residues to enhance soil structure, reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers, and support long-term agricultural productivity. Similarly, tree planting is practiced by 96% of respondents, reflecting active engagement in environmental conservation and an understanding of the benefits of agroforestry, including soil stabilization, microclimate regulation, fuelwood provision, and long-term ecological resilience.

High uptake of crop rotation (95%) further demonstrates adherence to sustainable farming practices that improve soil health, disrupt pest and disease cycles, and enhance yields. This practice appears closely linked to participants' use of the GALS challenge action tree for increasing incomes, which supports farmers to analyze production constraints along the value chain and identify practical actions to address them. By linking soil management practices to income generation, participants are strengthening both productivity and household economic outcomes.

In addition, 89% of respondents reported using energy- and labor-efficient cooking technologies, suggesting growing acceptance of improved cookstoves and energy-efficient solutions. These technologies contribute to reduced fuel consumption, time savings—particularly for women—and decreased pressure on natural forests, reinforcing the environmental and social co-benefits of sustainable energy use.

Overall, the high levels of adoption across soil fertility management, agroforestry, crop diversification, and energy-efficient technologies point to a strong integration of environmental management practices at both household and community levels. These results suggest increased awareness of environmental challenges and a growing capacity to apply climate-resilient and resource-efficient practices, reflecting the positive contribution of GALS to sustainable livelihoods and environmental stewardship (see Figure 16).

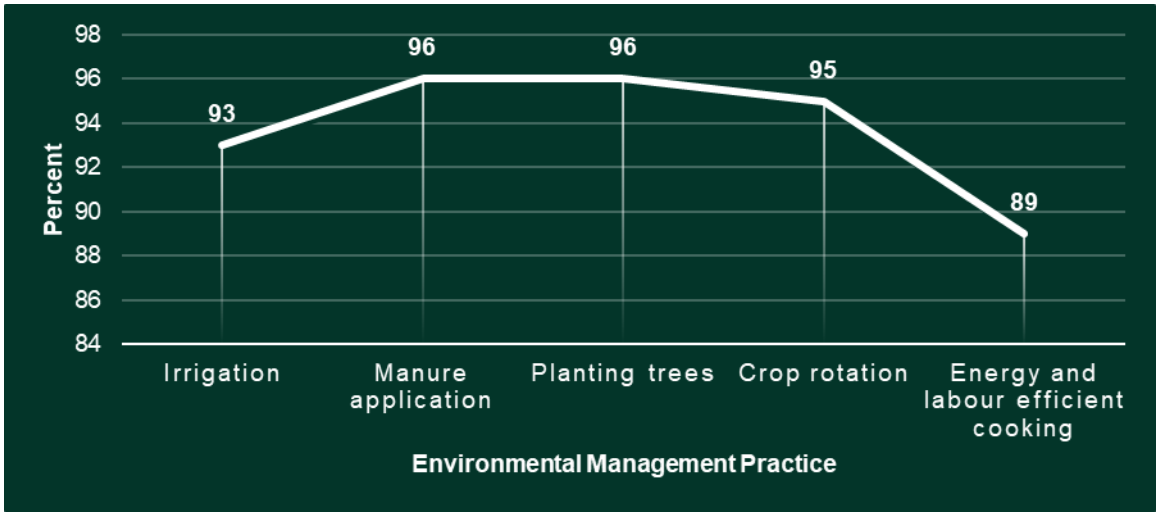


Figure 16. Contribution of GALS to environmental management practices for households

4. Conclusion

This learning assessment demonstrates that the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) has delivered incremental and sustained gender-transformative outcomes in Malawi, particularly in the context of scaling climate-smart agricultural innovations under the CGIAR Scaling for Impact (S4I) program. The findings show that GALS has gone beyond raising awareness to catalyze concrete changes in household decision-making, gender relations, leadership, asset control, and the adoption of sustainable agricultural and environmental management practices.

The evidence highlights strong gains in individual and collective agency, with women, men, and youth increasingly engaging in joint visioning, financial planning, and governance processes at both household and community levels. The high levels of participation, peer-to-peer diffusion, and continued use of GALS tools after the end of formal project support underscore the methodology's relevance, accessibility, and self-sustaining nature. Importantly, GALS has enabled shifts in social norms—reducing gender-based violence, redistributing labour, and increasing women's leadership and voice—thereby addressing structural barriers that often limit the equitable scaling of innovations.

At the same time, the assessment identifies clear opportunities to strengthen institutional uptake, deepen facilitation quality, and better link GALS to economic and policy processes. While community-level transformation is strong, organizational and policy-level integration remains uneven, highlighting the need for deliberate strategies to embed GALS within governance systems, extension services, and development programming.

Overall, this assessment confirms that GALS is a powerful enabling methodology for responsible and inclusive scaling. When adequately supported, institutionalised, and adapted, it can play a critical role in ensuring that innovations in food, land, and water systems deliver equitable, resilient, and transformative outcomes at scale.

5. Recommendations

Based on the assessment findings, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the effectiveness, institutionalization, and sustainability of GALS within the CGIAR Scaling for Impact Program and partner structures:

1. Deepen Capacity Building and Mentorship

- Strengthen the quality and consistency of GALS facilitation by expanding regular refresher trainings, advanced facilitation modules, and structured mentorship for GALS Champions, household trainers, and facilitators. This will help maintain methodological fidelity, prevent dilution as GALS scales, and support deeper engagement with more complex tools such as the challenge action tree and social empowerment map.
- Establish peer learning networks and communities of practice at district, national, and regional levels to enable facilitators to exchange experiences, troubleshoot challenges, and continuously improve practice. These networks can also serve as platforms for innovation and adaptation of GALS across sectors.

2. Integrate GALS with Economic Empowerment Initiatives

- Strengthen intentional linkages between GALS and economic empowerment initiatives, including village savings and loans associations (VSLAs), agribusiness development, water user associations, irrigation schemes, and market access interventions. Doing so will ensure that gains in agency and decision-making translate into tangible economic outcomes.
- Promote the deliberate use of GALS tools in entrepreneurship development, household financial planning, value-chain analysis, and climate-resilient livelihood strategies, reinforcing the role of GALS as both a social and economic transformation methodology.

3. Strengthen Monitoring, Evaluation, and Communication

- Embed GALS within decentralized governance and community institutions—such as village development committees, farmer organizations, and water user associations—to support sustainability and accountability beyond project lifecycles.
- Enhance evidence generation, documentation, and learning systems, including the systematic use of Most Significant Change stories and MELIA-A indicators, to demonstrate impact pathways and inform adaptive management. Strengthen communication strategies to package and share evidence with policymakers, practitioners, and donors.

4. Promote Organizational and Policy Uptake

- Engage government ministries, NGOs, and development partners to mainstream GALS across sectoral programs, particularly in agriculture, irrigation, livelihoods, climate resilience, social protection, and natural resource management.
- Pursue targeted policy dialogue and advocacy to secure institutional commitment, budgetary allocation, and formal recognition of GALS as a gender-transformative approach within national and sub-national development frameworks.

5. Adapt and Simplify GALS Tools for Broader Application

- Continue to adapt GALS tools to diverse cultural, literacy, and institutional contexts, simplifying complex steps where necessary while preserving core transformative principles. Particular attention should be given to making tools accessible for youth, low-literacy participants, and institutional actors.
- Pilot and document **cross-sectoral applications of GALS** (e.g., health, education, nutrition, climate adaptation) to expand its relevance and demonstrate its versatility as a system-wide change methodology.

6. Foster Inclusive Participation and Leadership

- Maintain a strong focus on the meaningful inclusion of women, youth, and marginalized groups in all aspects of GALS implementation, leadership, and decision-making. Move beyond participation toward intentional leadership development and representation in governance spaces.
- Address remaining barriers to inclusion through targeted outreach, mentorship, safeguarding measures, and practical support mechanisms, ensuring that GALS continues to challenge—not reinforce—existing power imbalances.

By implementing these strengthened recommendations, CGIAR and its partners can build on the strong foundation established by GALS in Malawi, ensuring that gender-transformative outcomes are not only sustained but systematically scaled and institutionalized to deliver lasting impact across food, land, and water systems.

6. Appendices

Appendix A. GALS Learning Assessment Questionnaire

_____
_____
Name of respondent: _____
Sex (*Tick*): □ Female □ Male □ Youth (15–24 years)
Age: _____ years
District: _____
EPA: _____ Village: _____
Role in GALS *(tick)*:

Role in GALS	**Tick**
Champion	
HH trainer	
HH member	
Other (specify)	

Date of interview: _____
1. How many GALS trainings or sessions have you attended? _____
2. What specific skills or knowledge did you gain from these trainings *(tick)*?

Skill or knowledge	**Tick**
Visioning and goal setting	
Financial management and economic empowerment	
Gender equality and power relations	
Communication and conflict resolution	
Leadership and collective action	
Problem solving	
Other *(specify)*:	

3. Give examples of the visions that you have seen people achieve as a result of their participation in GALS training (tick)

Vision	**Tick**
Irrigation	
House	
Car	
Livestock (cattle, goats, pigs etc.)	
Business	
Food security	
Other (specify)	

4. How many people have benefited directly or indirectly from your knowledge of GALS?

Response	Tick one
Regularly	
Occasionally	
Rarely	
Never	
Regularly	

5. How often have you participated in GALS-related community activities or meetings after your initial training?

Response	Tick one
Regularly	
Occasionally	
Rarely	
Never	
Regularly	

6. Since attending GALS training, how confident do you feel participating in household or community decision-making?

Response	Tick
Not confident	
Somewhat confident	
Confident	
Very confident	
Not confident	

7. Who usually makes important decisions in your household on the following (select the appropriate):

Area of decision	Tick			
	Mostly husband	Mostly wife	Jointly	Other (specify)
Finances				
Farming				
irrigation				
Education				
Food and nutrition				
Technology adoption				

8. What changes have you noticed in the participation of the following groups of people in the community after GALS training?

Group	Tick		
	Decreased	No change	Increased
Men			
Women			
Youth			

9. What changes have you noticed in the participation of the following groups of people in decision-making after GALS training?

Group	Tick		
	Decreased	No change	Increased
Men			
Women			
Youth			

10. What changes have you noticed in leadership by the following groups of people in the community after GALS training?

Group	Tick		
	Decreased	No change	Increased
Men			
Women			
Youth			

11. What lesson or best practice have you learned through GALS?

Lesson	Tick
Gender equality and shared responsibility	
Financial planning and economic empowerment	
Participation and leadership	
Communication and conflict resolution	
Visioning and planning	
Practices emerging from GALS implementation	
Social and institutional transformation	
Others (specify)	

12. How did you share GALS lessons?

Mode of sharing	Tick
Training	
Meetings	
Story telling	
Reports	
Visits	
Agricultural fairs	
Other (specify)	

13. Are there regular reviews or learning sessions to discuss evidence and adapt the GALS program?

Answer	Tick
Yes	
No	

14. What changes have you observed in gender roles and resource allocation in your household and community after GALS training?

Observed change	Tick
Decreased sharing of roles	
No change	
Increased sharing of roles	
Equitable access to assets	
Decreased gender-based violence	

15. What changes have you observed in local institutions since GALS training (e.g., VSLAs, committees)?

Observed change	Tick
More inclusive	
More gender-balanced	
More transparent	
No change	
Other (specify)	

16. Show the level of change for the following social norms or community attitudes?

Area of assessment	Tick		
	Negative change	No change	Positive change
Control and decision-making over resources (Agency)			
Voice, respect, and participation (Empowerment)			
(Conflict and relationship dynamics)			
Livelihoods: (Economic and work norms (Cohesion)			
Broader social norms and cultural change (Transformation)			

17. Rate the relevance of the following GALS tools to your household needs?

Tool	Tick		
	Not relevant	Relevant	Very relevant
Vision journey			
Gender balance tree			
Challenge action tree			
Social empowerment map			

18. How often do you apply GALS tools in your daily life (in farming, savings, business, etc.)

Tool	Tick			
	Regularly	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Vision journey				
Gender balance tree				
Challenge action tree				
Social empowerment map				

19. Explain how GALS has influenced the following:

Criteria	Tick		
	Low influence	Some influence	Strong influence
Household decision-making			
Addressing gender-based violence			
Influencing long-term HH and community changes			

20. Are community members still applying GALS principles independently?

Answer	Tick
Yes	
No	
Not sure	

21. How have the following changed in your household since joining GALS?

Ownership aspect	Increased	Decreased	No change
Income			
Assets			

22. What change have you observed in your household's well-being after GALS?

Area of assessment	Increased	Decreased	No change
Food and nutrition			
Education			
Health			

23. What changes have you observed in the following practices after GALS?

Area of assessment	Increased	Decreased	No change
Gender-based harmful practices			
Social and cultural harmful practices			
Economic and institutional harmful practices			

24. Answer the following questions:

Question	Tick	
	Yes	No
Do you know of any organizations or local governments that have adopted GALS tools or approaches?		
Have success stories or lessons been documented and shared with other groups?		

25. How are environmental or resource management practice improvements linked to GALS?

Practice	Tick		
	Strongly linked	Not linked	Weaky linked
Management practice			
Irrigation			
Manure application			
Planting trees			
Crop rotation			
Energy and labor-efficient cooking			

26. What has been the most significant change in your life since joining GALS?
27What challenges remain in promoting gender equality and empowerment?
28What recommendations do you have to improve the GALS program in your area?

Appendix B. MELIA-A Indicators for GALS Learning Study

The MELIA-A indicators are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) while also remaining participatory, allowing communities and GALS Champions to actively define, monitor, and track progress. These MELIA-A indicators aim to tell an impact and transformative story that measure agency, power, and social/structural institutional change. The following indicators have been organized under MELIA-A dimensions and defined within the RBET Framework as an overarching framing to capture gender-transformative change, inclusivity, adoption, learning, and sustainability:

1. Monitoring Indicators

a) Results (inputs, activities, and outputs)

- Number of GALS trainings conducted.
- Number of participants directly reached and benefited, disaggregated by sex and age.
- Number of individuals indirectly reached through others.

b) Behavior (empowerment and participation)

- Proportion of participants empowered to engage in household and community decision-making.
- Levels of participation in program activities by women, men, and youth.

c) Evidence (learning and use of knowledge)

- Documentation of lessons and best practices emerging from trainings and community engagements.
- Extent to which evidence is generated and shared with IWMI and stakeholders.

d) Transformation (norms, structures, systems)

- Observable changes in gender roles and relations at household and community levels.
- Shifts in local institutional structures, practices, and behaviors towards greater inclusivity and equity.
- Evidence of evolving social norms that promote gender equality and empowerment

2. Evaluation indicators

a) Results (relevance and effectiveness of GALS tools)

- % of women, men, and youth reporting improved decision-making power in household matters.
- % of households adopting joint financial planning and visioning tools to guide resource use and future goals.

b) Behavior (practice and application)

- % of participants applying GALS tools in farming, irrigation, or market activities to improve livelihoods.
- Reported changes in household conflict resolution and communication, demonstrating adoption of more equitable and collaborative practices.

c) Evidence (learning and effectiveness assessment)

- Extent to which evidence from participant experiences validates GALS as relevant and effective in strengthening household decision-making, planning, and livelihoods.

Documented lessons on how behavior changes are contributing to improved household and community outcomes.

d) Transformation (sustainability and norm change)

- Evidence of sustained empowerment of women, men, and youth in decision-making across multiple domains (economic, social, and resource-related).
- Long-term institutionalization of joint decision-making and planning practices within households and community groups.
- Shifts in household and community norms toward equitable conflict resolution, collaboration, and respect across genders and generations

3) Learning indicators

a) Results (knowledge gained)

- Extent to which participants demonstrate increased knowledge of GALS concepts, tools, and approaches.
- Number and proportion of participants able to recall, explain, and apply key lessons from trainings.
- Evidence that knowledge gained addresses the practical needs of households, communities, and institutions.

b) Behavior (changes in practice and application)

- Observable changes in individual and group practices as a result of knowledge gained (e.g., financial planning, collective action, equitable decision-making).
- Number of households or groups adopting new behaviors aligned with gender equality and empowerment.
- Evidence of participants applying lessons in their daily lives, work, or organizational practices.
- Instances where changes in behavior have led to improved household relations, productivity, or community collaboration.

c) Evidence (learning and feedback)

- Quality and relevance of lessons documented from program activities.
- Extent to which participants and stakeholders reflect on what worked, what did not, and why.
- Frequency and quality of feedback loops used to capture learning and share it with IWMI and partners.
- Evidence of knowledge exchange among participants, communities, and institutions.

d) Transformation (use of lessons for improvement and adaptation)

- Degree to which lessons learned inform adaptations in program design and delivery.
- Evidence that stakeholders (communities, implementing partners, policymakers) apply lessons to improve ongoing and future work.
- Instances of institutional or policy changes influenced by program learning.
- Sustainability of knowledge and practices gained, demonstrated through replication, scaling, or long-term integration.

4. Impact assessment indicators

a) Results (social and economic gains)

- Long-term improvements in household income, asset ownership, and economic resilience.
- Increased access to and control over productive resources (e.g., land, credit, markets, technology) by women, men, and youth.
- Improved household well-being in terms of food security, nutrition, education, and health status.
- Evidence of sustained reductions in poverty and economic vulnerability at the household and community levels.

b) Behavior (social norms and practices)

- Long-term shifts in gender roles and household decision-making dynamics (e.g., shared responsibilities, equitable workload distribution).
- Decline in harmful practices, such as gender-based violence or discriminatory inheritance/marriage customs.
- Sustained participation of women, men, and youth in leadership and governance structures.
- Continued adoption and scaling of GALS tools for financial planning, problem-solving, and collective action.

c) Evidence (institutional learning and uptake)

- Documentation of how GALS has influenced sectoral programs (agriculture, finance, social protection) over time.
- Evidence that government, NGOs, or community-based organizations have integrated GALS methodologies into policy or practice.
- Extent to which lessons from GALS have informed broader development strategies at local, district, or national levels.
- Knowledge products, case studies, or evaluations showcasing long-term impact and lessons.

d) Transformation (systemic and environmental change)

- Institutionalization of inclusive policies and practices that promote gender equality and empowerment.
- Strengthening of local governance and accountability mechanisms to ensure equitable resource allocation and representation.
- Long-term environmental benefits (e.g., adoption of climate-resilient practices, sustainable natural resource use) are linked to GALS-informed planning.
- Societal transformation reflected in greater equity, solidarity, and resilience across communities.
- Enduring cultural and attitudinal change towards gender equality across generations

5. Adaptation/adjustment indicators

a) Results (program responsiveness)

- Number and type of program adjustments made in response to monitoring and evaluation findings.
- Timeliness of adjustments implemented to address emerging challenges or opportunities.

b) Behavior (adaptive practices)

- Extent to which staff and partners change their practices based on lessons learned and evidence generated.
- Level of collaboration among stakeholders in co-creating adjustments to improve program effectiveness.

c) Evidence (use of learning for adaptation)

- Extent to which lessons learned informed program, policy, or strategy adjustments at institutional and community levels.
- Quality of documentation showing how evidence was analyzed and applied to decision-making.
- Frequency of evidence-sharing mechanisms (reviews, learning workshops, feedback sessions) used to promote adaptive learning.

d) Transformation (transparency and institutionalization of learning)

- Degree of transparency and feedback provided to IWMI and stakeholders on how evidence-informed decisions.
- Integration of adaptive learning processes into institutional systems and policies (e.g., routine reviews, adaptive management frameworks).
- Evidence of a sustained culture of learning and adaptation within program and partner institutions.
- Long-term policy or institutional shifts influenced by continuous program adjustments.

Appendix C. Most Significant Change Story Collection Form

CONFIDENTIALITY

The one collecting the story should explain to the storyteller that MERAMO Consulting, IWMI, and its stakeholders might use their story for reporting to its funders and partners, as well as sharing widely within its work locations.

Do you, *(ask the owner of the story)*:

1. Want to have your name on the story? Yes ☐ No ☐
2. Consent to us using your story for publication? Yes ☐ No ☐ ☐

CONTACT DETAILS

Name of storyteller[1]: _____
Location: _____
Phone number of the storyteller: _____
Date of recording: _____
Name of the person recording the story: _____
Phone number of the person recording the story: _____

QUESTIONS

1. Explain the changes that you have experienced after using the knowledge and skills gained from the IWMI GALS training.

Significant change 1:

_____
_____
_____

Significant change 2:

_____
_____
_____

Significant change 3:

_____
_____
_____

2. Of all the significant changes that you have told me, what is the MSC? (*tick*)

Significant change 1: ☐
Significant change 2: ☐
Significant change 3: ☐

*Other significant change (**explain**):*

_____
_____

3. Why is the change named above the most significant for you?

_____
_____

4. Do you have any comments about the IWMI GALS training?

_____
_____

[1] If the storyteller does not want to be named, do not record their name, just indicate male, female or youth

Disclaimer
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