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Fostering gender-transformative change for equality in food systems: a review of methods and strategies at multiple levels

By Cynthia McDougall, Marlène Elias, Desiree Zwanck,
Karen Diop, Johana Simao, Alessandra Galiè,
Gundula Fischer, Humphrey Jumba and Dina Najjar



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ABOUT CGIAR GENDER IMPACT PLATFORM

Generating Evidence and New Directions for Equitable Results (GENDER) is CGIAR's impact platform designed to put equality and inclusion at the forefront of global agricultural research for development. The Platform is transforming the way gender research is done, both within and beyond CGIAR, to kick-start a process of genuine change toward greater gender equality and better lives for smallholder farmers everywhere. gender.cgiar.org

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CONTACT

CGIAR GENDER Impact Platform
at International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)
PO Box 30709
Nairobi 00100, Kenya
Tel. +254-20 422 3000
GenderPlatform@cgiar.org



CGIAR GENDER Impact Platform

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Cynthia McDougall

Stockholm Environment Institute
(SEI)

cynthia.mcdougall@sei.org

(Corresponding author)

Marlène Elias

The Alliance of Biodiversity
International and International
Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)

marlene.elias@cgiar.org

Desiree Zwanck

Eiffage Énergie Systèmes
zwanck@gmail.com

Karen Diop

Black Inclusion, Success and Strategic
Initiatives, McGill University
karen.rockya.diop@gmail.com

Johana Simao

Independent Gender and Climate
Specialist
johana.simao@live.fr

Alessandra Galiè

International Livestock Research
Institute (ILRI)

a.galie@cgiar.org

Gundula Fischer

Independent researcher and
consultant

gundulafischer@gmx.net

Humphrey Jumba

International Livestock Research
Institute (ILRI)

h.jumba@cgiar.org

Dina Najjar

International Center for Agricultural
Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)

d.najjar@cgiar.org

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Abstract

Development and research for development agencies and actors working in agriculture, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, and natural resource management have been increasingly seeking to address gender inequalities in food systems. To date, common methods and strategies toward this aim have been designed to work around gender barriers. Rooted in a gender-accommodative approach, these tend to address the symptoms of inequality. For example, programs bring activities targeting women into the homestead to work around women's workloads and mobility constraints, instead of addressing these constraints. There is growing acknowledgment, however, that lasting change requires engaging with deeper drivers of inequalities. Specifically, it requires addressing the underlying and often unrecognized structural roots of inequalities that are embedded in food systems and natural resource management. These are found within informal (e.g., norms), formal (e.g., regulations, laws, policies) and semiformal (e.g., statistics and data systems) structures.

Gender-transformative methods and strategies are explicitly oriented to address these underlying structural causes. These have been gaining attention over the past decade. They complement but differ from common gender-accommodative methods and strategies, including women-targeting. However, the methods and strategies that foster gender-transformative change are complex and nuanced and, as such, they may be misinterpreted or misapplied. Moreover, while transformative change at scale in food systems is urgently needed, practical application of gender-transformative methods and strategies has been most developed at the local level; this means there are considerable uncertainties about how to (and what kinds of methods or strategies can) catalyze transformative change at scale. Both challenges underscore the need to further unpack understanding of gender-transformative change in food systems—and particularly underscore a need to elucidate current state-of-the-art methods and strategies and their characteristics at multiple levels. More broadly, there is an imperative to generate a greater shared understanding among development and research for development agencies and actors about how and in what ways gender-transformative methods and strategies answer the call for this type of substantive change at scale in food systems.

In response to these needs, this working paper aims to elucidate **current and emerging methods and strategies that may support gender-transformative change in food systems at and across multiple levels**. As such, the working paper not only asks what gender-transformative methods and strategies exist at different levels, but also inquires more deeply: *How do current and emerging gender-transformative methods and strategies inform the understanding and framing of transformative change toward equality in food systems at scale?*

To this end, the working paper shares and examines an illustrative set of methods and strategies that contribute (or have the potential to contribute) to gender-transformative change in food systems. The paper conceptualizes and reflects on this set of methods and strategies at three levels: local, meso and macro, and intraorganizational. Within this set and at each level, the paper critically considers these methods and strategies in relation to three key analytical dimensions: intersectionality, accessibility and scalability. These dimensions were identified in early analysis for this working paper as being important and in need of further strengthening and clarification in relation to supporting gender-transformative change at scale.

Through the above, the working paper illustrates relatively established gender-transformative methods for local-scale programming, such as household methodologies. The paper also draws attention to emerging strategies that are gaining attention for use at the meso and macro levels (such as changes to financial and data systems and feminist foreign policies) as well as at intraorganizational levels (including organizational culture change processes

that foster gender equality). Through its analysis, the working paper offers insights into core mechanisms of gender-transformative methods and strategies needed to catalyze transformative change. These include reflexivity to surface naturalized inequalities, and action learning processes at the local and intraorganizational levels to disrupt normative constraints that otherwise (re-)create inequalities. In conclusion, the working paper suggests a novel way of understanding how to catalyze gender-transformative change at scale: rather than research for development and development agencies focusing (solely) on using transformative methods in more and more communities (*scaling out*), the paper suggests the need for agencies to explicitly invest in a multilevel strategy of *scaling out, up and in*. We propose that it is through such an interconnected, multi-actor and multilevel approach that we may collectively create a tipping point toward gender equality in food systems.

This working paper has been developed for researchers and development practitioners, as well as civil society, private or public sector actors, working in and on food systems who are interested in testing, adapting, monitoring, evaluating or otherwise applying gender-transformative methods and strategies in food systems. It may also be of interest and use to professionals in funding agencies to inform their investments in food systems, especially those interested in gender-transformative change at scale.

This resource is part of a working paper series which curates and synthesizes methods and tools for, with and on gender in food-systems research, under the purview of the Methods Module of the CGIAR Generating Evidence and New Directions for Equitable Results (GENDER) Impact Platform.

1. Introduction

As enshrined in SDG 5, gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls are now widely recognized in the development and research for development (R4D) sectors as intrinsically important objectives. Development and R4D agencies, as well as policy, civil society and private sector actors, are also increasingly investing in gender equality and women's empowerment because of their essential instrumental role in fostering progress toward food and nutrition security, poverty reduction, sustainability and resilience (UN Women 2018).

In line with this commitment, R4D and development agencies and actors working in food systems—be it agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, livestock or natural resource management—now recognize and seek to address gender inequalities in food systems. Common gender methods and strategies to date have been designed around *accommodating* (working around) gender barriers; these tend to address the *symptoms* of inequality. For example, programs may bring activities for women into the homestead to work around women's workloads and mobility constraints, instead of addressing these constraints. Programs have also increasingly operationalized gender aims through 'targeting' women as beneficiaries.

It is increasingly acknowledged, however, that substantive and lasting change requires engaging with deeper drivers, i.e., root causes (Cornwall and Rivas 2015). Specifically, such change requires addressing the underlying and often unrecognized structural roots of inequalities that are embedded in natural resource management and food systems. These are found within informal (e.g., norms), formal (e.g., regulations, laws, policies), and semiformal (e.g., statistics and data systems) structures. Underlying structural constraints continuously re-create and perpetuate inequalities in food systems, despite development interventions. Addressing constraints embedded in these structures—while enhancing women's agency and leveling gender relations—is thus a critical foundation of progress toward gender equality.

The potential of a gender-transformative (GT) approach has been gaining attention in development and R4D as it is explicitly oriented around addressing these deeper structural causes. In this regard, as illustrated in Figure 1, a GT approach complements, but differs from, the more commonly used gender-accommodative approach and 'women-targeting' (McDougall et al. 2021a). Having emerged from the reproductive health sector in response to the need to address harmful norms, including those underlying gender-based violence,¹ the approach has been picked up in wider development programming. The approach has gained traction in agricultural, fisheries and aquaculture, livestock, and natural resource management R4D (hereafter simply R4D) and programming in the past decade. Its particular focus has been on addressing normative barriers to equality as norms are deeply rooted and shape society, including influencing formal and semi-formal structures.²

Moving forward, as underscored by the UN Food Systems Summit 2021,³ there is an imperative to catalyze GT change and thus a need to develop and embrace a GT approach in multiple forms and arenas for systemic change in food systems. While more systematic evidence is needed (ibid.), the existing literature shows that a GT approach in development programming and R4D has the potential to address gender inequality and inequitable power dynamics more effectively than accommodative and/or women-targeting approaches. For example, when applied in food systems at the local (household, group, community) level, evidence suggests that a GT approach can outperform a gender-accommodative approach in terms of outcomes such as more equitable control over resources (FAO et al. 2020).⁴

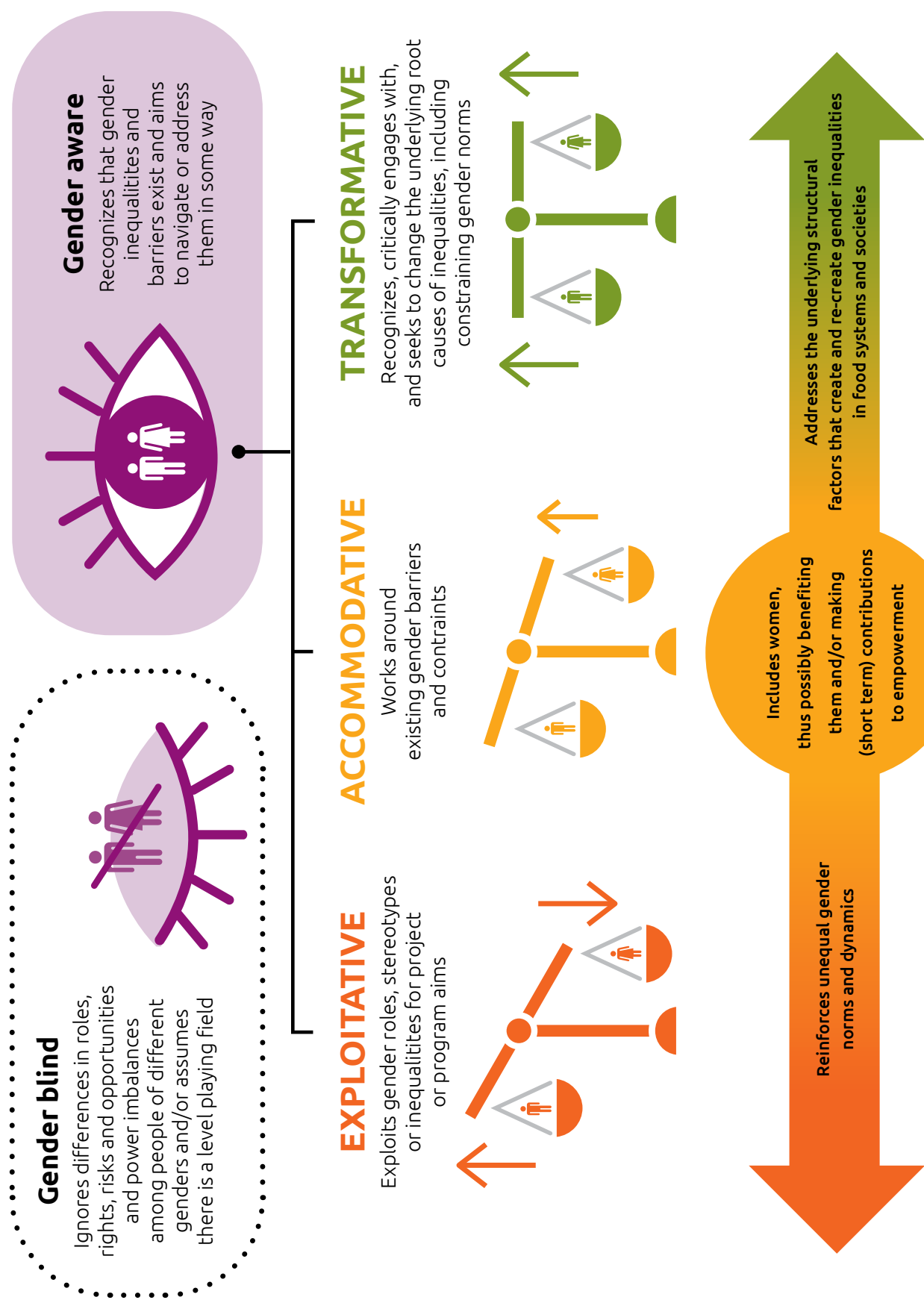


Figure 1. A continuum of gender approaches

Source: adapted from McDougall et al. (2021c); based on Kleiber et al. (2019), FISH (2017) and drawing on a gender continuum from IGWG (2017).

The concept of a GT approach and the use of GT methods and strategies are growing rapidly in food-systems R4D and practice. Yet, other than one recent compendium of a set of GT methods (FAO et al. 2020), the methods and strategies themselves are dispersed in the literature. It is thus challenging for researchers and practitioners to understand how methods and strategies relate to one another; and to know which GT methods and strategies to use, for which purpose, and at which scale. There is thus a need to bring these insights together in a way that helps researchers and practitioners identify, make sense of and navigate options. This is a primary motivation for this working paper.

Unpacking this further, as noted in a recent review by CGIAR (McDougall et al. 2021a), there are several gaps or aspects of GT methods and strategies in need of further attention. We interpret and surface four dimensions of these that have guided the orientation of this working paper.

First, as underscored by the CGIAR review (ibid.), gender inequality is reproduced and enforced by structural barriers at multiple, interacting levels—thus there are calls to catalyze transformative change *at scale* (in the system as a whole, addressing multilevel, nested structural constraints). Yet progress with piloting GT methods in food systems to date has been primarily at the local (household and up to community) level, with fewer advances at other levels. More clarity and guidance are thus needed about GT methods and strategies at other levels of food systems, from communities (local level), to markets, states and society at large (meso and macro levels), including within R4D organizations and development agencies (intraorganizational level). There are considerable uncertainties regarding what change at scale would entail. Attention is therefore needed on how GT methods and strategies at various levels might differ and interact and, more fundamentally, how to conceptualize catalyzing transformative change at scale (through the whole system).

Second, in terms of focus, attention to GT change in food systems to date has been on GT methods addressing informal structures, particularly restrictive gender norms (the social expectations about how women, men, girls and boys should behave in society and in given contexts).⁵ While norms represent an essential structural aspect to address for transformative change in systems, the interconnected, formal and semiformal structural root causes have recently been recognized as critical to address because they also create and re-create inequalities in food systems.⁶ These include, for example, policy and national statistics (data) systems.

Third, the review highlighted the need for more attention to GT methods and strategies in relation to crosscutting social inequities (i.e., intersectionality).

Finally, and more fundamentally, we note that GT change and the methods and strategies used to foster this change are conceptually complex and nuanced. This means that the rapidly growing interest in GT methods and strategies, and uptake by new-to-the field researchers and practitioners, poses a risk that they may be misinterpreted or misapplied.

As such, this is an important juncture: there is a need to ground understanding of GT methods and strategies for research and practice in food systems. There is a particular need to elucidate the core characteristics of current state-of-the-art GT methods and strategies. By extension, this may help researchers and practitioners know how and to what degree they can adapt GT methods and strategies to different contexts and programs without losing their ‘transformative’ nature. These gaps and needs set the stage for this working paper.

In response to these four dimensions, the overall goal of the working paper is to advance understanding of GT methods and strategies in food-systems R4D and practice at multiple levels. Within this, the objective is to elucidate methods and strategies, and their core characteristics, that can support GT change in and throughout food systems. In doing so, the working paper aims to help food system researchers and practitioners sharpen their awareness of how to effectively operationalize a GT approach, by increasing their understanding of fit-for-purpose methods and strategies at different levels, especially in relation to the call for GT change at scale in food systems.

These goals were addressed by examining a range of existing and emerging GT methods and strategies—including their characteristics—at local, higher and intraorganizational levels. Specifically, the guiding **questions** were:

- *What commonalities and differences emerge* between GT methods and strategies **within** local, meso and macro, and intraorganizational levels?
- *What insights for food-systems transformation toward gender equality emerge* from assessing GT methods and strategies **across** these three levels?

Through these questions, the working paper goes beyond asking what GT method and strategy options exist at different levels. Specifically, it inquires more deeply into *how current and emerging GT methods and strategies inform the understanding and framing of transformative change at scale in food systems*.

To this end, the working paper reviews an illustrative set of methods and strategies that may contribute to GT change in food-systems research and practice. As outlined further in the methodology (section 3), this is not a systematic review nor comprehensive coverage of all available methods and strategies. Instead, we present a range of examples within a framework to unpack and explicate GT methods and strategies, and ways to enable GT change in food systems at scale. To address the gaps and questions, the framework and analysis is multilevel; it conceptualizes and reflects on GT methods and strategies at the local, meso and macro, and intraorganizational levels. Similarly, it engages with informal, formal and semiformal barriers embedded in food systems. Within this, and to inform the insights, it critically considers three key analytical dimensions (see section 3):

- intersectionality (how gender and other social identities—age, ethnicity or caste, class and so forth—interact to manifest compounding, contextually-specific discrimination, marginalization and inequalities)
- accessibility (of the methods for practitioners and participants)
- scalability (of the methods and strategies to other contexts and by other actors)

Through the above approach, this working paper offers insights into core mechanisms of GT methods and strategies. These include reflexivity (that surface naturalized inequalities) and action learning processes (that disrupt structures that re-create inequalities, especially at the local and intraorganizational levels). By bringing the insights together in this way, this paper provides a novel way of understanding GT methods, strategies and change at scale: rather than focusing (primarily) on R4D and development facilitating GT methods in more and more communities (scaling out), it recommends agencies focus on the combination of *scaling out, up and in* using multiple methods and strategies to create a tipping point toward gender equality in food systems.

The working paper is structured as follows. Following this introduction, and the overview of key terminology in box 1, section 2 outlines the conceptual anchors of this working paper: *structures* (formal policies, semiformal systems, and informal norms) and *levels* (local, meso and macro, and intraorganizational). Next, section 3 briefly presents the methodology used to develop this working paper, including the three analytical dimensions considered in the assessment (intersectionality, accessibility and scalability). Section 4 then examines a set of illustrative GT methods and strategies in relation to each level and analytical dimension, highlighting core characteristics or differences at each level. Section 5 offers a deeper discussion that generates insights across the GT methods and strategies in order to respond to the key questions identified above. Specifically, it synthesizes the insights that emerge from looking across the three levels separately, then together; it then challenges R4D to reconceptualize what catalyzing GT change at scale in food systems may entail. The working paper concludes (section 6) with five takeaway messages for researchers and practitioners.

Box 1. Terminology: gender-transformative approach, methods and strategies

There are increasing variations to and nuances of the definitions of a GT approach and related terms. While respectful of this diversity, for the sake of clarity in this working paper we use the terms as follows.

Gender-transformative approach

In this working paper, a **GT approach** refers to an approach in development or R4D that is intentionally oriented, facilitated and applied with the aim of examining, challenging and transforming the *underlying* causes of gender inequality. These causes are rooted in social structures, including the gender norms that underpin imbalances in gender power dynamics, roles and relations.

This meaning is reflected in figure 1, which demonstrates that a GT approach can be visualized on a continuum of gender approaches. It specifically contrasts a gender-accommodative approach, which seeks to work around barriers, while a GT approach seeks to address and transform underlying causes.⁷ The guiding theory is that by transforming underlying drivers, the GT approach breaks the cycle of gender barriers and constraints being created and perpetuated over time.

The meaning used here is intended to track with wider current framings at the time of writing, such as that of the FAO that outlines that a GT approach aims to examine, challenge and transform the:

underlying causes of gender inequality rooted in inequitable social structures and institutions. As such the gender-transformative approach aims at addressing imbalanced power dynamics and relations, rigid gender norms and roles, harmful practices, unequal formal and informal rules as well as gender-blind or discriminatory legislative and policy frameworks that create and perpetuate gender inequality. By doing so, it seeks to eradicate the systemic forms of gender-based discrimination by creating or strengthening equitable gender norms, dynamics and systems that support gender equality.

(FAO n.d.[a])

Much recent attention of the GT approach has been primarily on informal structures (gender norms), mainly at the local level. In this working paper we recognize norms as a centrally important structural driver to address and build on that momentum; at the same time, we follow the FAO, UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) and others in emphasizing the need for transformative change through purposively addressing key systemic drivers of inequality in formal (e.g., policy) and semiformal institutional structures (such as statistical systems or financing systems) at all levels. In doing so, we recognize the inherent interconnectedness of structures, including that these formal and semi-formal structures are themselves shaped by, and further entrench, gender-unequal norms.

GT methods and strategies

In this working paper we use the terms **methods and strategies** to describe the procedures and practices by which an approach (in this case a GT approach) is operationalized.

In this framing, the level—or combination of levels—at which GT methods and strategies are applied may vary.⁸ In this working paper, the term **gender-transformative methods** (GT methods) is most often utilized in relation to procedures and practices at the local (i.e., households, groups and community) and intraorganizational levels. As outlined in section 4, these are embodied by the better-known dialogic processes sparking the critical reflection, action and learning that catalyzes GT change in restrictive norms and power relations.

Note that in this working paper:

- Methods may involve specific **tools** (facilitated exercises) that are applied within the methods, such as the **Hopes and Fears activity**⁹ and others.
- In some cases, these methods (and associated tools) have been bundled into stepwise, systematic and branded ways to foster normative change at a household to community level (e.g., Cooperative for Relief and Assistance Everywhere [CARE]’s **Social Analysis and Action** or Helen Keller International [HKI]’s **Nurturing Connections**). For the sake of clarity and recognizing the investments in these, we refer to these as **GT methodologies**.

For the purpose of this working paper, the broader term **GT strategies** is a better fit for practices or mechanisms we identified at the meso and macro levels; thus, we use the term strategies at those levels as well as for cross-level practices, such as seeking allies.

2. Conceptual framework

The framework used in this working paper is based in two conceptual anchors: *structural barriers* and *levels*. The framework is informed by Rao et al.'s (2016) Gender at Work Analytical Framework, which elucidates change in relation to (and nuanced around) formal to informal “rules” and the individual to systemic levels. While Rao et al. (ibid.) focus on the workplace, this framing is refined and applied in this working paper to consider changes in gender equality in food systems.

To explore the two conceptual anchors, we:

- present a brief overview of the types of *structures* that shape gender equality, upon which GT methods and strategies aim to effect change
- unpack our framing of the different *levels* at which GT methods and strategies operate

2.1 Structures

Food systems, and societies more broadly, are fundamentally anchored in structures. While there are many different ways to define structures, here we refer to the deeply rooted aspects of food systems—or more broadly, society—that underpin and (re-)create patterns of relations and outcomes of the systems.¹⁰ This working paper builds on the growing recognition of the imperative for change in *informal structures*—referring to the intangible core of sociocultural systems, in particular the norms (and associated gender hierarchies) that embody and reproduce gender inequalities. In line with Rao et al. (2016), the UNFSS, IGWG (2017) and others, we expand on this to explicitly give attention to *formal structures*, particularly policies and regulations. These entrench and drive inequalities in societies and thus are critical to challenge in enabling GT change. We add nuance to this binary framing (formal and informal) to explicitly surface a third and interrelated category of structures that has received less attention: *semiformal structures*¹¹ (such as statistical/data systems, financial systems and so forth—as well as R4D systems themselves). As with the first two structures, we are interested in semiformal structures in that they systematize, reproduce and entrench inequalities in societies—often without being noticed. As such, we follow McDougall et al. (2021b) in suggesting that the addition of semiformal structures of these kinds is important to this discussion as it draws attention to these systems as potential powerful levers for change toward gender equality. While this aspect of the framing itself will no doubt continue to evolve over time, it is implicit in the direction that UNFSS has taken in its calls for GT approaches.¹²

Why include three types of structures?

All three (formal, semiformal and informal) structures embody deeply rooted, underlying drivers of inequalities. Systemic change in food systems at scale will require catalyzing transformative change in and through all three types of structures. As such, all three are included in the working paper framing.

Note: The recognition of the three categories of gender-related structures in this working paper does not mean that any and all methods and strategies operating in relation to norms, policies or systems are de facto gender transformative. Rather, as outlined above, to be gender transformative, methods and strategies need to be intentional in their design and outcomes in terms of transforming *the underlying causes* of gender inequality.

2.2 Levels

As underscored in Kabeer's (1994) earlier feminist analysis in the fields of feminist political ecology and economy, and more recently in socioecological models in relation to gender and development,¹³ structural gender barriers in food systems exist at all levels. As such, addressing structural barriers (which span from formal to informal, as shown by the dotted lines in figure 2) will require engaging with constraints at several levels of food systems concurrently. From a systems perspective, engaging at all levels is required if food systems are to move from the historically uneven and slow progress (and even decline, in response to system shocks such as COVID-19) to a social tipping point toward equality (McDougall et al. 2021b).

As such, we use these levels as the central organizing feature of our conceptual framework. Specifically, we examine GT methods and strategies at three levels (figure 2):

- local: with and within households, groups and communities
- meso and macro: in markets, states and societies
- intraorganizational: in development and R4D organizations themselves

While presented as distinct for conceptual clarity, it is critical to note that these three levels are interactive, interdependent and nested—and their interactions dynamic. That is, change at one level causes change at others in mutual, anticipated and unanticipated ways, because systems are complex and unpredictable. Each level is discussed in its own subsection below. We draw on and extend this framing in the discussion section, asking: *What does this mean for scaling GT change?*

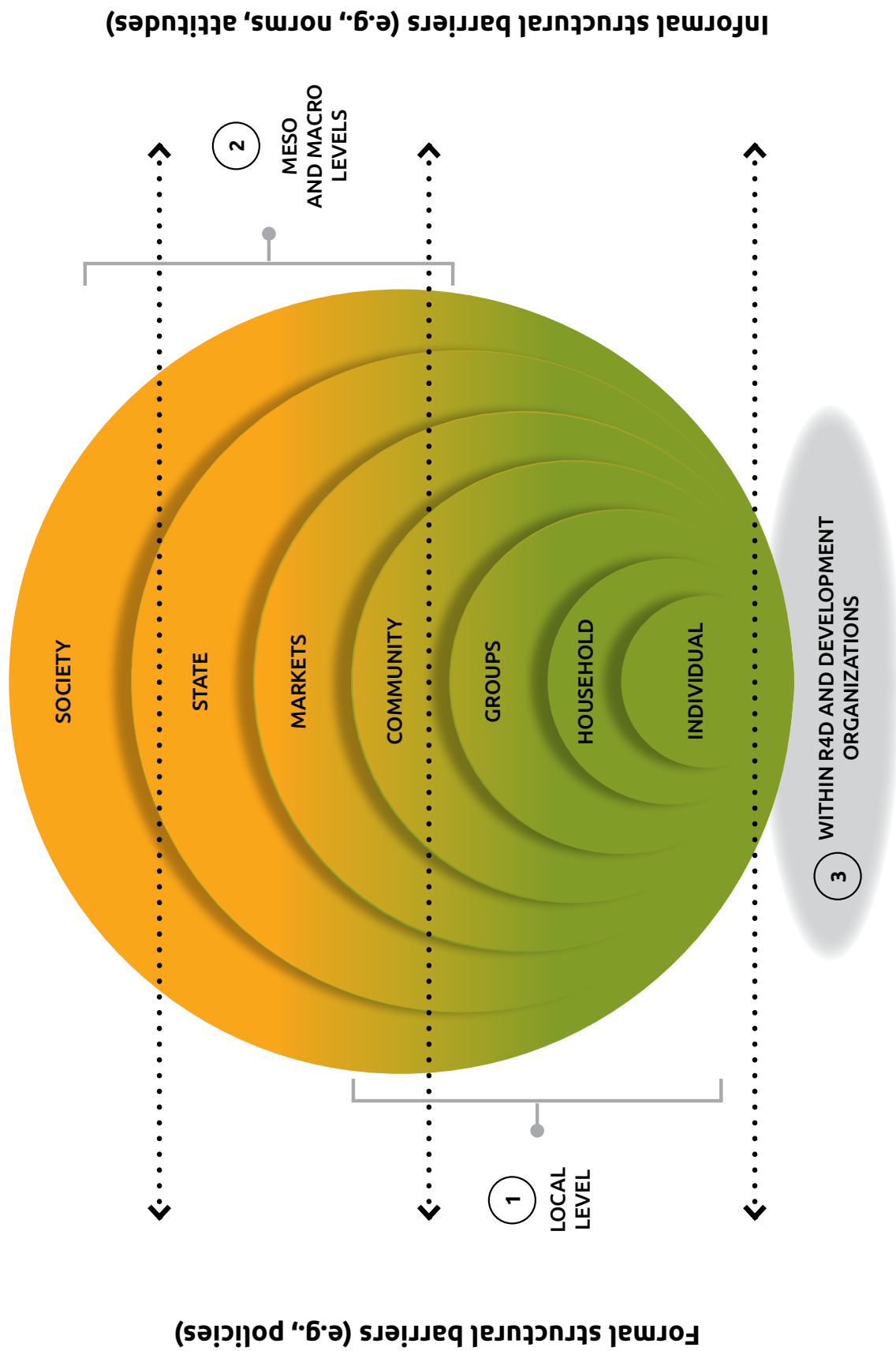


Figure 2. Conceptual framing: from formal to informal structures, operating at three levels

Source: adapted from McDougall et al. (2021b), drawing on Rao et al. (2016) and IGWG (2017).

2.2.1 Gender-transformative methods at the local level: with and within households, groups and communities

GT methods have been predominantly applied by development or R4D projects in food systems with and within households, groups or communities—including in production, processing, value chains, nutrition or microcredit. We start by examining GT methods at this level because of their rapid growth and high demand to date.

Unpacking this level further, a key question arises: *At which stage of programming are GT methods relevant?*¹⁴ In response, this working paper seeks to elucidate how different types of GT methods applied at this local level are associated with different stages in the project (or program) cycle, from (1) formative methods used at the scoping and design stage, to (2) catalytic methods used during project implementation, and finally (3) measurement methods used in the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) stages (figure 3).

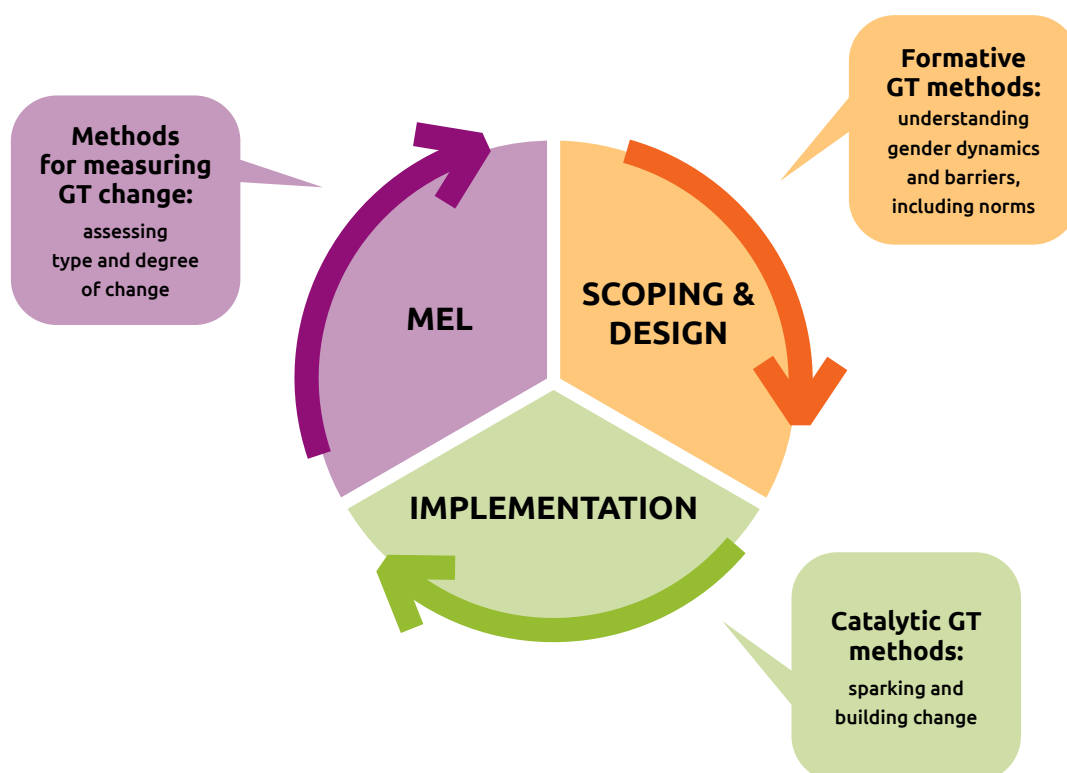


Figure 3. Conceptualizing local-level GT methods in the project cycle: formative, catalytic and measurement methods

Source: adapted from McDougall et al. (2021b); see also Mullinax et al. (2018) and Lau et al. (2021).

As described in box 2, these groupings reflect the methods' relevance and ability to:

- diagnose the development challenge from a social relations perspective, including identifying underlying structural drivers of inequalities such as constraining norms (*formative*)

versus

- catalyze transformative change in discriminatory structures via intentional GT change-oriented design, facilitation and activities—embedding these within participatory action research processes, training or other R4D or development activities (*catalytic*)

versus

- assess GT change (*measurement*)

Although we refer to ‘project stages’, this analysis can equally apply to programs. We apply these three categories to our analysis of local-level GT methods in the results and discussion (sections 4 and 5, respectively).

Box 2. Gender-transformative methods at the local level: formative, catalytic and measurement

Formative GT methods: These methods are used during the *scoping and design stage*. They generate a diagnostic understanding of (intersectional) gender dynamics (interactions, relations, and patterns of behavior) and, specifically, of underlying gender barriers that create those dynamics in particular contexts. They may assess, for example, the gender division of labor, decision-making and distribution of benefits or burdens, and seek to identify the underlying factors (e.g., norms, belief systems) that drive these. Their primary focus is on generating data to inform the design of catalytic GT strategies (next stage), and to inform overall project design.

Catalytic GT methods: These methods are designed to spark and build change during the *implementation stages of a project or program*. Their primary focus is on catalyzing change in local-scale structural gender barriers, such as constraining gender norms, to lay the foundations for greater equality. Catalytic methods, as used here, are not only about developing interest or commitment for change in support of equality among people of all genders within households, groups and the wider community, but also operationalizing (piloting, actioning) ideas or strategies for change.

Methods for measuring GT change: These methods assess changes in gender norms and dynamics, or other structures linked to implementation, usually as a part of project or program MEL. In other words, they are a part of tracking and measuring outcomes, learning, improving and reporting. Their primary purpose is to generate information about what is changing/has changed, in which direction, under which conditions, in relation to whom, and why. Although this stage is often represented (including in figure 3) as following the scoping, design and implementation stages, in fact methods for measuring are ideally designed *during the scoping and design stage*. They may be initiated at the project outset (e.g., to generate a baseline, possibly overlapping with the formative methods). Carrying them out during the implementation stage then provides critical information on process as well as for learning and improvement, while using them at the end of a project or program establishes progress toward ultimate project or program outcomes.

Note that while the exercise of ‘matching’ methods with a project stage might be relatively straightforward conceptually, it is less straightforward in practice. The methods and tools may have a primary focus, but their use at one stage may have secondary or spin-off effects at other stages. For example, formative and MEL methods (inquiring about norms) may overlap. Similarly, while formative and MEL methods primarily aim to generate data on norms, they may also (secondarily) spark greater local awareness of constraining gender norms, thereby potentially playing a small role in setting up for (catalyzing) normative change.

2.2.2 Gender-transformative methods and strategies at the meso and macro levels: in markets, states and societies

At this level, GT methods and strategies aim to enact transformative change in market, state and broader societal spheres. Note that like other levels, GT methods and strategies at the meso and macro levels go deeper than gender sensitivity or responsiveness; they intentionally aim and are designed to transform underlying drivers of inequalities.

The inclusion of this level reflects the recognition of the need for GT change at multiple levels, as framed in the UN agencies’ use of a socioecological model,¹⁵ and in recent calls for

GT change at these levels by the UNFSS (2021).¹⁶ The inclusion of this higher level also builds on earlier feminist work such as Kabeer's early emphasis on giving more attention to unequal gender relations in multiple, interacting spheres ("institutional sites"), including market and state, in addition to household and community (Kabeer 1994).

As noted in the methodology of this working paper (section 3): in considering this level, we include examples that are possibly better described as 'strategies' than 'methods' per se, given that they may be, for example, actions for influence within sectors rather than methods within projects.

2.2.3 Gender-transformative methods and strategies within organizations: change within R4D agencies and actors

This level refers to methods for GT change within R4D and development organizations working in food systems. Overall, GT methods and strategies operating within this level are framed not as addressing organizations' technical knowledge and skills, but rather *deeper cultural and institutional change* within organizations and partnership networks themselves—intentionally aiming and designed to transform underlying drivers of inequalities.

It is included here because, for those facilitating GT methods at the local level, addressing gender inequality *within* their own organization is a foundation for their credibility, quality and success.¹⁷ For example, a recent assessment of factors enabling effective GT research found that funding alone was far from sufficient; the study team identified the need for internal organizational systems and policies to align with feminist principles, be less hierarchical internally and more collaborative with external partners (Mullinax et al. 2018). These strategies were seen as "creating a supportive environment and creating a sense that the organizations were doing themselves what they asked of others" (ibid. 29).

Along the lines of Rao et al.'s (2016) Gender in the Workplace Framework, GT methods or strategies at the intraorganizational level aim to address formal, semiformal and informal barriers to gender equality, starting from the individuals who facilitate GT methods to the whole organization that invests in them. The individual aspect includes the R4D and development actors' mindsets and mental models, assumptions, biases, values (and skills and capacities related to a GT approach, including self-awareness) that shape their behaviors and practices. The organizational aspect includes the norms, cultures and so forth of the team(s) and organization—and its policies and systems—that shape organizational behaviors, practices, decisions and investments, and overall enabling (or disabling) environments at this level.

Although this level is framed primarily as intraorganizational, we suggest it could usefully include the wider lens of networks and partnerships through which equality is shaped, and GT methods and strategies are mobilized.

3. Review and analytic methodology

This working paper was developed through a multistep process to identify and assess an illustrative set of GT methods and strategies. As such, it represents a purposive approach and is not intended to be a systematic literature review, nor offer comprehensive coverage of all available methods and strategies. Rather, the paper's methodology serves to elucidate a range of current and emerging methods and strategies at different levels that aim to contribute to GT change in food systems, and to unpack them using shared analytical dimensions to generate wider insights.

3.1 Identification of gender-transformative methods and strategies

To identify methods and strategies, the team of consultants (now co-authors) first conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with five members of the CGIAR GENDER Impact Platform's 10-member Gender Transformative Approaches Working Group who represent a combination of gender in R4D expertise and potential users of emerging insights in the field. Next, based on recommendations of all members of this CGIAR Working Group, the team assembled a list of published GT methods and strategy resources perceived as important, including gray literature describing the methods and their application. Additional methods were subsequently identified through a review of the reference lists of the materials gathered, and from a review of websites of organizations identified in the literature or by the Working Group.

From this long list of potential methods, the lead authors selected the final methods for inclusion in the working paper ($n = 20$). As well as basic criteria of *reliability* (based on the source and quality of information provided) and offering *sufficient information* for analysis, a critical criterion shaping selection was that the set of methods and strategies should be diverse and that the *combined* set should *span the three levels* (local, meso–macro, and intraorganizational). Note that the methods included demonstrated being GT in nature, in that they addressed structural barriers, but whether they self-identified as GT did not drive inclusion or exclusion. Some GT methods included are associated with a particular 'branded' methodology (e.g., Nurturing Connections by HKI), while other methods are generic (unbranded). To allow for investigation at the meso and macro levels, the team purposively included 'strategies' in addition to narrowly defined methods (methodologies, methods, tools).

3.2 Review of gender-transformative methods and strategies

To review the selected methods and strategies, first we classified the identified GT methods or strategies by the *level* at which they were implemented: local, higher (meso and macro) or intraorganizational. Within the local level, we unpacked GT methods by type (formative, catalytic, measurement) as per the conceptual framework (section 2). After categorizing the methods and strategies in this way and grouping as needed, we reviewed them for each level, including any available information about components and mechanisms (how they work, what they aim to transform).

We then analyzed the emerging patterns and insights from each level for three analytical dimensions: intersectionality, accessibility and scalability (defined in section 3.3 below). These were key dimensions identified during the semi-structured interviews outlined above

(see section 3.1) as being particularly important to the ability of GT methods and strategies to effectively support GT change at scale, yet currently in need of additional strengthening or clarification. In cases where the available information on the methods or strategies did not reference these dimensions, we have noted this and made an indication of the possible application, based on the available information. Gaps noted do not mean that the methods or strategies could not relate to the issue or address a given challenge (e.g., intersectionality), but rather that the resources found were not explicit about these aspects.

We subsequently analyzed commonalities and differences within each level, including by types of structural barriers addressed, and identified gaps and insights for ways forward. Finally, we replicated this analysis *comparatively* across the three levels (see section 5) to elucidate broader insights that would inform responses to the overarching question of this working paper.

3.3 Analytical framework: the three dimensions of intersectionality, accessibility and scalability

Our analysis systematically engages with three dimensions relating to the GT methods and strategies examined: intersectionality, accessibility and scalability. These terms are explained briefly in box 3.

Box 3. Defining intersectionality, accessibility and scalability

Intersectionality: Intersectionality refers to how multiple axes of social identity (such as socioeconomic status or ethnicity) intersect and interact with gender, manifesting in overlapping and compounding discrimination and disadvantage (or conversely, power and privilege).

Accessibility: Accessibility of methods and strategies refers to the ease of:

- use for R4D and development actors
- engagement and/or use by diverse participants

Both include ease of comprehension, adaptability and flexibility. The latter relates to engagement by people of any gender who may be marginalized, for example, based on their educational status, access to technology, disability, language or other factors.

Scalability: Scalability (or transferability) as we apply it refers to the potential for the given method or strategy to be applied in new and a growing number of contexts, and/or taken up and applied by new actors (other than those who developed them) to reach a large number of people. As such, it relates to the concept of accessibility for R4D and development actors as outlined above but expands to consider this at the next level.

These three key dimensions were included for analysis with the following rationales:

- Intersectionality: For its influence on the quality and impact of R4D overall,¹⁸ and also in response to the call in the CGIAR review (McDougall et al. 2021a) and by key informants for greater clarity in regard to progress of GT method or strategies engaging with intersectionality.
- Accessibility: For its ability to directly shape the likelihood of success, as well as the equity, of the GT methods and strategies.
- Scalability: For consideration because of the strong concern for how GT change can happen beyond single sites or pilots and be implemented on a large scale.

In developing this working paper, they were used as follows:

- Intersectionality: We considered the extent and ways in which the available information on the selected methods and strategies has been explicit about engaging an intersectional lens.
- Accessibility: To explore this dimension, we considered the extent to which the complexity of the method or strategies (or included tools/necessary resources) may limit its use by R4D actors and facilitators and/or limit marginalized people of any gender from engaging with the method. We considered elements such as explanations needed for the use, ease of use, resources needed for its application, and the nature of the involved processes and facilitation.
- Scalability: We assessed scalability using the likelihood that uptake by others and in other sites would either be relatively feasible or constrained, and if it has already been used in/ transferred to multiple sites or organizations.

4. Results: a review of gender-transformative methods and strategies

In this section, we organize the results by the three levels:

- local: with and within households, groups and communities
- meso and macro: in markets, states and societies
- intraorganizational: in development and R4D organizations themselves

For each level, we examine each GT method or strategy in terms of its basic features (components or tools, transformative mechanisms) and how it answers to the three key dimensions: intersectionality, accessibility and scalability. We follow each of these tables with a brief reflection on commonalities and differences among GT methods and strategies, including which type of structural barrier they engage with.

In this section, while some methods or strategies are presented on their own, in some cases multiple examples are grouped under the same method or strategy in the results tables. This was done when the key mechanism for GT change was shared, and more readily elucidated by bringing similar methods or strategies together.

4.1 Review of methods at the local level

The 13 examples of methods we present in table 1 and discuss in this section represent a range of GT methods applied at the intrahousehold, group or community levels. These methods are associated with different project stages and showcase a range of strategies for achieving change (e.g., dialogues versus drama skits). As noted earlier, given that the tools may contribute to more than one stage of a project cycle, the positioning of methods in table 1 give general guidance as to their primary purpose rather than a strictly delineated typology.

Table 1. GT methods at the local level by stage of project cycle

Method	Stage of project cycle			Models and resources informing the method in this working paper
	Formative	Catalytic	Measurement	
GENNOVATE methods and tools	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GENNOVATE toolkit: CGIAR (Petesch et al. 2018; Elias and Badstue 2020) • See also FAO et al. (2020)
Gender analysis to inform GT methods design and implementation	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall guidance, including assessment of structural barriers and relations (CARE 2012; 2014; Hillenbrand et al. 2015) • Example: WorldFish (Cole et al. 2015; 2016; 2020; Rajaratnam et al. 2015; Dierksmeier et al. 2015) • Formative stage research and theory of change (Mullinax et al. 2018)
GT household methodologies		X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Household Approach of Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (Lecoutere and Wuyts 2020) • Gender Model Family: Social Enterprise Development Foundation of West Africa (SEND West Africa 2014; SEND Sierra Leone n.d.) • Individual Household Mentoring: International Foundation for Agricultural Development (IFAD 2014; 2019; n.d.) • See also FAO et al. (2020)
Facilitated GT exercises within/combined with technical training		X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurturing Connections (HKI 2015) • GT approach applied in aquaculture training: WorldFish (Farnworth et al. 2016; FAO 2021) • AngelL Project: International Food Policy Research Institute (Quisumbing et al. 2021) • Promoting Gender-Transformative Change with Men and Boys (Promundo-US and AAS 2016) • See also FAO et al. (2020)
Facilitated GT sessions within microcredit groups or other development programming		X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Savings and Internal Lending Communities Plus Gender-Transformative Approach (SILC+GTA) (Promundo-US and WorldFish 2016; Cole et al. 2021) • Social Analysis and Action (SAA): CARE (Mekuria et al. 2015)
Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools		X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAO et al. (2020); FAO (n.d.[b]) • Informed by Gender Action Learning System (GALS) (Oxfam Novib 2014; WEMAN and Oxfam Novib 2014)
Community theater as behavior-change communication		X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum Theater (theater for development; Theater of the Oppressed) (Involve 2018) • Drama skits and facilitated discussion (Cole et al. 2020) and associated tools (Mtonga et al. 2016)

Method	Stage of project cycle			Models and resources informing the method in this working paper
	Formative	Catalytic	Measurement	
Community dialogue and action planning		X*		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Conversation Approach (WFP 2014; Save the Children 2017) See also FAO et al. (2020); Lemma et al. (2021)
Gender attitudes and relations scales			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple methods from the <i>Compendium of Gender Scales</i> (Nanda 2011)
Gender behaviors and norms assessments (quantitative)			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CARE (2017a) Guidance for formulating gendered social norms indicators (FAO et al. 2022)
Systematic assessments of norms and normative change (qualitative)			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drawing on <i>Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP) framework</i>: CARE (2017a; 2017b)
Open-ended monitoring of GT outcomes			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including unintended consequences (Hillenbrand et al. 2015; CARE 2020) General guidance (Hassnain and Somma 2020)
Outcome mapping adapted for GT change			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Development Research Centre's <i>Outcome Mapping approach</i> (Earl et al. 2001) Indicators (Mhango et al. 2015; Hillenbrand et al. 2015)
Select case examples of branded methodologies that work across all project phases (see 4.1.4)				
Journeys of Transformation	X	X	X	Promundo and CARE Rwanda (2012)
Gender Action Learning System	X	X	X	Oxfam Novib (2014)
Social Analysis and Action	X	X	X	Mekuria et al. (2015)

*Note: This would be formative only if it stops at discussion; it may be catalytic if it involves action cycles.

As illustrated in table 1, we focused on qualitative methods (and tools) in the formative stage and include quantitative in the measurement stage. For example, vignettes were applied within qualitative research methods such as focus group discussions (FGDs) or semi-structured interviews and/or may be informed by key informant interviews. We present in this way because, in addition to avoiding duplication, although projects and programs do use quantitative surveys in the early stages of fieldwork (e.g., as baselines) the intention of the formative stage in this case is primarily to address the 'what' and 'why' questions (e.g., to inform what issues, norms and so forth that the catalytic methods should focus on) versus 'how much' questions, which are often a primary focus of the measurement stage). When used longitudinally, formative methods may nonetheless be used to assess change over time and may thus contribute to measurement as well; we elucidate this in section 4.1.3.

4.1.1. Formative gender-transformative methods

In this section we present two examples of GT methods for formative assessments of gender dynamics and underlying barriers to gender equality (table 2). These both illustrate shared characteristics and differences, including primary users of the information.

Table 2. Illustrative set of formative GT methods

GENNOVATE methods and tools	
Example/ resource highlighted here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GENNOVATE toolkit: CGIAR (Petesch et al. 2018; Elias and Badstue 2020) • See also FAO et al. (2020)
Tools	FGDs and semi-structured interviews with tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Man/Good Woman • vignettes • Ladder of Power and Freedom
Entry points and participants	Individuals, households, communities.
Mechanisms/ how it works	Diagnostic study following a specific set of methods and tools (can be mixed and matched) to understand gender norms and dynamics in agricultural innovation.
Intersectionality	Explicit about heterogeneity; unpacks gender, age and socioeconomic status.
Accessibility	Requires social science and gender R4D skills. Accessibility to participants depends on design and facilitation.
Scalability	Open-access methods, tools and guidance available; resource people available, given the extensive use (implemented in 26 countries).
Notes	GENNOVATE toolkit originally designed for analysis as a study on its own. Can be adapted to inform catalytic GT methods' design. Used as a whole or in parts.
Gender analysis to inform GT methods design and implementation	
Example/ resource highlighted here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall guidance, including assessment of structural barriers and relations: CARE (CARE 2012; 2014; Hillenbrand et al. 2015) • Example: WorldFish (Cole et al. 2015; 2016; 2020; Rajaratnam et al. 2015; Dierksmeier et al. 2015) • Formative stage research and theory of change (Mullinax et al. 2018)
Tools	Range of tools, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informal discussions • key informant interviews, FGDs, semi-structured interviews with tools such as vignettes • literature reviews
Entry points and participants	Individuals, households, communities.
Mechanisms/ how it works	Qualitative assessment to understand gender norms and dynamics, in particular underlying constraints and issues that could be explored and addressed through GT methods.
Intersectionality	Depends on design and how it is carried out.
Accessibility	Depends on design and how it is carried out; requires social science and gender R4D skills.
Scalability	Easy to scale overall as it uses common and familiar methods.
Notes	This dedicated analysis at project outset is required to identify gender norms and dynamics. Findings inform design of subsequent catalytic GT methods, as well as MEL.

The formative GT methods presented in table 2 generate data on gender and social norms and dynamics for the purpose of informing design of the project's subsequent catalytic GT methods, and other aspects of the project. Here we elucidate the common characteristics and differences that emerge.

Commonalities and key features

- All the methods use tools that generate qualitative data, aiming to surface 'how' and 'why' questions (not count or quantify) about normative barriers and gender dynamics.
- The methods involve some indirect questioning and tools (e.g., vignettes) as prompts to help surface norms and inequitable dynamics because these may be internalized (and unrecognized) and may not be directly, readily observable.
- In theory, they are all accessible to participants; in practice, their accessibility depends on design and facilitation, and on the mobilization of relevant social-science research skills.
- All have potential to scale because they rely on commonly used and familiar methods (e.g., FGDs, interviews).

Differences

- **Formality and standardization:** **GENNOVATE** is highly structured and comprehensive. It comprises standardized questions as it was initially designed to allow for comparative analysis across case studies. In contrast, the **gender analysis to inform GT implementation** method refers to more open-ended, smaller studies designed to elicit the needed practical information to effectively design the next project stage and other aspects of the project.
- **Intersectionality:** Attention to intersectionality is explicit in **GENNOVATE**, as it was designed to address a well-defined set of research questions, which include comparisons across socioeconomic and age groups, for a comparative study. Whether or how intersectionality is considered in the **gender analysis** is not explicitly defined in the materials reviewed, and will depend on the larger study, project or program it supports.

Gaps and other insights

- The review found little documented information on GT methods that explicitly used ethnographic and observation-based methods to examine underlying gender barriers. We suggest these could add value in terms of contextualizing, nuancing and triangulating information.
- The small sample of formative methods presented are oriented toward understanding informal structural barriers (i.e., norms). Is there a need for formative GT methods to also assess informal gender hierarchies (i.e., value systems), and/or more explicitly or holistically assess semiformal and formal drivers at this local level?
- While not precluding a nonbinary framing of gender, the resources included in the review were not explicit about the need or potential to use a nonbinary framing.

One of the biggest mistakes made when formulating a [behavior-change] strategy is that staff will hypothesize why their target audience behaves the way they do instead of verifying the target audiences' beliefs, attitudes, intentions and behaviors through research. DON'T GUESS!!! Base decisions on evidence, not conjecture, and keep checking.

CARE (2014, 10)

4.1.2. Catalytic gender-transformative methods

The six types of catalytic GT methods presented in table 3 show a range of entry points and mechanisms. In most cases, the types presented draw on multiple ‘branded’ GT methodologies (e.g., Nurturing Connections [HKI 2015]) or unbranded GT methods (e.g., WorldFish Bangladesh’s integration of GT exercises within aquaculture training [Farnworth et al. 2016]). Table 1 provides the resources on which each of these types draws. Because these methodologies require a substantial and prescribed time investment, we include a row in table 3 that specifies this time component.

Table 3. Illustrative set of catalytic GT methods

GT household methodologies (couples coaching and mentoring)	
Example/resource highlighted here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Household Approach of Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (Lecoutere and Wuyts 2020) • Gender Model Family: Social Enterprise Development of Foundation of West Africa (SEND West Africa 2014; SEND Sierra Leone n.d.) • Individual Household Mentoring: IFAD (2014; 2019; n.d.)
Components and tools	<p>External facilitators or trained local mentors work with couples directly over time. Tools include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • joint visioning • matrices of activities and control • family action plan outlining how to change unhelpful gender patterns • pledges • after action reflection
Entry points and participants	<p>Couples (spouses).</p> <p>Often embedded within livelihood, water, sanitation and hygiene projects or other interventions. Piloting (by IFAD) is underway in relation to climate mitigation and adaptive capacities.</p> <p>Some link upward/outward to influence community and farmer organizations.</p>
Mechanisms/how it works	<p>Uses in-depth facilitated sessions over time. Facilitation enabling safe intrahousehold reflection and dialogue about gendered decision-making, division of labor or other dynamics and plans for addressing inequalities. Couples also reflect on impacts, including on their children, and actions to improve dynamics.</p> <p>May involve a pyramid dimension: coaching of others by couples who become champions (community or farmer organization change agents).</p>
Duration	Ranges from 12–48 months.
Intersectionality	<p>Some resources not explicit on intersectionality; this could be expanded (e.g., how age, literacy or abilities influence intracouple dynamics).</p> <p>Some versions (e.g., IFAD’s Individual Household Mentoring), use a social lens to target particularly marginalized households.</p>
Accessibility	<p>Some sessions may involve up to 10–12 couples together, thus accessibility depends on facilitation skill (i.e., ability to manage spousal dynamics in a group setting).</p> <p>Couples transitioning together and pyramid coaching may provide peer-to-peer access/support.</p>
Scalability	The diversity of sources and reported uptake to date suggest it is relatively widely in use, demonstrating scalability provided organizations have the human and financial resources and time (it is not a “quick fix”).
Notes	May be prefaced with gender analysis, training and possibly sensitizing leaders. Some versions include complementary women’s empowerment strategies (e.g., leadership training). Gender Model Family includes link to rights (e.g., education).

Facilitated GT exercises within/combined with technical training	
Example/resource highlighted here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nurturing Connections (HKI 2015)
Components and tools	<p>Facilitated, interactive sessions about gender norms and relations including reflection and visioning new ways of being or dynamics. Nurturing Connections has four base modules that focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> building communication and trust understanding perceptions about gender negotiating power within the household and community acting for change <p>Tools include: Hopes and Fears, Peace in the Home, and Good Girls Don't Talk Loudly.</p>
Entry points and participants	<p>Trainees and their spouses and influential family members (households).</p> <p>Entry point is a time-bound nutrition, agriculture and/or aquaculture training program.</p> <p>Some models have run these exercises concurrently with powerful community members, leaders and neighbors to reduce barriers at the community level (as context for household change).</p>
Mechanisms/how it works	<p>Modules are <i>woven into</i> technical training (e.g., nutrition, agriculture and/or aquaculture).</p> <p>Sessions bring in trainees' spouses and powerful household members so that household barriers to women trainees applying skills, knowledge and innovations can be surfaced and addressed. May engage participants separately (by gender) and together as couples/households.</p> <p>Includes stories, roleplay and discussions to spark "aha moments" (increased internal and shared awareness).</p>
Duration	Ranges from 4–14 months.
Intersectionality	Not explicitly intersectional but includes analysis and discussion of diverse sources of power (i.e., age, physical strength, wealth).
Accessibility	<p>Easy to use with sufficient facilitation and gender skills.</p> <p>The group size (15–20) is small enough to allow for relatively active engagement, provided there are effective facilitation skills.</p> <p>Exercises may include tools such as drawing and/or videos that enable nonliterate members' engagement.</p>
Scalability	Used and adapted by multiple organizations. Readily scaled using the available Nurturing Connections Manual (HKI 2015) and related resources (such as Promundo-US and AAS 2016).
Notes	<p>HKI's Nurturing Connections model has been a foundation for adaptations by other agencies. The model is flexible; for example, WorldFish's adaptation merged Nurturing Connections with the Promoting Gender-Transformative Change with Men and Boys model (see Promundo-US and AAS 2016) and applied it within a local training program combining nutrition, polyculture production and use of a new technology.</p> <p>Includes synergistic empowerment-focused capacity building activities for women trainees, such as practicing assertiveness.</p>

Facilitated GT sessions within microcredit groups or other development programming	
Examples/resources highlighted here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SILC+GTA (Promundo-US and WorldFish 2016; Cole et al. 2021) • CARE's Social Analysis and Action (Mekuria et al. 2015) (see case study in 4.1.4)
Components and tools	<p>Facilitated, interactive sessions sparking reflexivity and change in gender behaviors and relations relating to household finances. Includes an explicit focus on moving from violence to respect in intimate relationships.</p> <p>For example, the SILC+GTA model has 12 sessions including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Gender Fishbowl My Partner and I: Working as a Team What Do I Do When I Am Angry?
Entry points and participants	<p>Women savings group members and their spouses (couples).</p> <p>Within ongoing savings and loans group meetings and financial training sessions.</p>
Mechanisms/how it works	<p>Brings spouses together (even if the group is women-targeted). Engages couples in experiential learning and shared reflection on household financial decision-making, reflecting on how their relations (including gender-based violence) influence current individual and family well-being, harmony and ability to meet goals.</p> <p>Uses a reflection-action-reflection process within the ongoing group processes to allow couples to try out new ways of being between sessions and return to reflect and adapt. May use networks, media or other strategies to extend learning beyond the sites and/or be scaled into programming.</p>
Duration	Applied over time (e.g., 12 sessions spread out over one year).
Intersectionality	Not explicitly intersectional in available resources, this could be expanded (e.g., how age, literacy or abilities influence intracouple dynamics).
Accessibility	The stepwise methodology is accessible for facilitators. Engagement in the processes is accessible overall, dependent on quality of facilitation including ability to keep an eye on spousal dynamics within a group setting and constructively manage potential conflict.
Scalability	Multiple successful pilots and adoption into wider programming already indicate it can be readily integrated into microcredit programming, with sufficient facilitation skills (not only financial and group training).
Notes	The SILC+GTA example emerged from concerns about women-targeted programming sparking backlash against women and loss of women's control over loans. Informed by Promundo's work (Journeys of Transformation), which is based in principles including the right to a life free of violence, and that men have a capacity for nonviolence and must be part of the solution.
Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools	
Examples/resources highlighted here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (see FAO et al. 2020; FAO n.d.[b])
Components and tools	<p>Facilitated, interactive sessions drawing on GALS tools and principles (Oxfam Novib 2014; WEMAN and Oxfam Novib 2014), combined with FAO adult farmer field school models. The group curriculum aims to enhance the agricultural and entrepreneurial skills of youth, and build skills for protecting from risks (e.g., gender-based violence, HIV).</p> <p>Tools may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • theatre and role play • Vision Road Journey • Gender Justice Diamond • Challenge Action Tree
Entry points and participants	Dedicated groups (e.g., boys and girls 12–17 years old).

Mechanisms/how it works	<p>Based here on and Life model of experiential learning, focusing on critical issues for youth well-being.</p> <p>Exercises and discussions promote self and collective awareness. Links growing understanding of current dynamics with action-oriented exercises about how to achieve desired futures.</p>
Duration	Over time, such as two seasons of learning (e.g., 9–12 months).
Intersectionality	<p>Engages specifically with the age demographic.</p> <p>Identified resources do not highlight an intersectional lens, but this could be integrated (e.g., class, ability or gender identity or sexual orientation).¹⁹</p>
Accessibility	<p>Relatively accessible for facilitators to access and deliver, but facilitators would require necessary GALS training. In particular, they would need appropriate skills to engage with highly sensitive topics including gender-based violence.</p> <p>Accessibility for participants depends on group size, dynamics and skill of facilitators.</p>
Scalability	<p>The momentum and spread of the original (adult) Farmer Field Schools²⁰ suggest scalability, if investments in time and capacities are sufficient.</p> <p>As with Farmer Field Schools, care is required to avoid the model being reduced to top-down knowledge transfer-style processes as they scale.</p> <p>Partnerships between youth agencies, health, and food-systems actors would be required.</p>
Notes	<p>Grows from rights-based foundations, including Rights of the Child and Right to Food.</p> <p>Uses synergistic empowerment strategies in conjunction with the GT methods (i.e., to build self-esteem and confidence through interpersonal communication and home gardening).</p> <p>May include participatory MEL as part of learning to inform reflection-action-reflection.</p>
Community theater as behavior-change communication (BCC)	
Examples/resources highlighted here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama skits and facilitated discussion (Cole et al. 2020) and associated tools (Mtonga et al. 2016). • Draws on a base community theatre model known as Forum Theater (see Involve 2018).
Components and tools	<p>Employs two connected steps, repeated together iteratively over time (e.g., every two weeks):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> community theater performance/process reflecting current, context-specific gender norms, relations and dynamics participatory dialogue sparked by/reflecting on the theatre performance, surfacing the norms, relations, dynamics and their consequences, as well as more equitable alternatives
Entry points and participants	<p>Mixed-gender groups, community or even in marketplaces.</p> <p>Groups may be participatory action research groups, such as those brought together for participatory technology development (e.g., Cole et al. 2020).</p>
Mechanisms/how it works	<p>By reflecting back norms, relations and dynamics, community theatre makes otherwise invisible dynamics 'visible' (more able to be named and discussed). As with other reflection-based methods, this (ideally) may contribute to "aha moments" of insight, shifting internal and shared perspectives. Can be embedded in participatory action research cycle to test and apply insights and emerging shifts in behavior. The community (audience) may participate with instructions for responses and endings.</p> <p>While less interactive, the use of video or film (e.g., featuring gender role models) is a related form of behavior-change communication. It has been used with groups at the local level in food systems and beyond.²¹ It would similarly rely on iterative cycles of reflection and trying out new ways of being.</p>
Duration	Iterations over multiple weeks to months.

Intersectionality	Can readily be adapted to use an intersectional lens if the information required for the adaptation is gathered in the formative stage (see 4.1.1).
Accessibility	Requires community theater actors in the team or partnerships. Highly accessible to participants as visual, locally relevant and often humorous. Drama enables sharing in a lighthearted manner and enables engagement as participants can speak to, for, or through the characters rather than having to speak from personal, private experience directly.
Scalability	Community theatre has been widely used in a range of forms for decades, so overall is readily scalable. Scaling requires time and resources, including adapting to context, and especially if embedded in participatory action research or other long-term processes (which seems more likely to lead to lasting change). Scaling strategies include strategic partnerships and showcasing via media to extend reach.
Notes	This model can be seen as growing from the earlier critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire's <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> , and especially Augusto Boal's related community theatre for education, known as <i>Theater of the Oppressed</i> . May be performed by actors and/or community members. Can be integrated with technological innovation (e.g., combining skits with participatory action research groups testing technologies).
Community dialogue and action planning	
Examples/ resources highlighted here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Conversation Approach (WFP 2014; Save the Children 2017) • See also FAO et al. (2020); Lemma et al. (2021)
Components and tools	A long-term process through which a cross section of community members reflect on gender-related challenges that prevent full valuing, engagement and benefit of women and girls in social, economic and/or production spheres—and create action plans to address these.
Entry points and participants	Implemented in communities through mixed-gender discussion groups. May be initiated through local cooperatives.
Mechanisms/how it works	Group meetings or externally facilitated community discussions on gendered practices impeding development, including norms, behaviors, decision-making, and discriminatory practices. Processes may vary, but groups meet regularly (e.g., recurring monthly). May be up to 50–60 people. Some versions may start with separate gender groups then converge, to build confidence and allow for freer dialogue. May strategically engage or build alliances with local leaders and powerful actors.
Duration	Long-term (e.g., 1–2 years).
Intersectionality	Not explicit in available resources; dependent on design and facilitation.
Accessibility	Requires skills in facilitation and working with gender. Large discussion groups, which may hinder full participation by less powerful members.
Scalability	The training of trainers and the stages of implementation are clear and well detailed for Community Conversation .
Notes	There is variation in interpretation and implementation, including themes. For example, while the UN World Food Programme's Community Conversation model focused on major challenges limiting women's participation in economic and social affairs, CGIAR's model involved researcher-facilitated local reflections on gendered perceptions of who has valuable knowledge in given agriculture or livestock production. Some locally led, mixed-gender Dimitra Clubs may use similar community dialogues and action planning methods, ²² including around gender power relations and positive masculinities (FAO et al. 2020).

Catalytic GT methods aim to co-create commitment, possibilities, momentum for, and personal and joint (or collective) experience with more gender-equal relations, norms and dynamics. They do so through intentionally transformative methods and tools in safe, enabling environments. Catalytic GT methods are reliant on skilled facilitation that sparks increased awareness of gender dynamics in the given context, its effects on individuals, families and communities, and enables joint strategizing for change.

Commonalities and key features

Although diverse, all methods:

- engage multiple genders—always at least men together with women—as co-agents of change
- make explicit and address underlying gender norms, attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate inequalities
- involve some form of safe spaces and facilitated dialogue to build effective communication, trust and ownership of change
- use methods and tools that spark reflexivity (critical reflection, self-awareness) to surface and make explicit dynamics and norms—that otherwise tend to be ‘invisible’ (internalized)—and generate ideas and commitment for self-directed change
- rely on iterative reflection-action-reflection cycles, drawing on and embodying a longer history of social and experiential learning²³
- enable participants to try out and iteratively take on new ‘ways of being’ in terms of gender norms, relations and dynamics
- require extensive time investment—taking place over months, if not years
- are not stand-alone—are connected to/embedded within a practical development area (e.g., livelihoods, nutrition)

Moreover, some (but not all) methods:

- come from a foundation of or explicit link to human rights, including land rights and right to freedom from violence
- design around a specific experiential mechanism to spark reflection and “aha moments” (new perspectives), such as theater or participatory exercises
- leverage visions and aspirations for one’s own life, family or community, using insights about how gender barriers limit one’s ability to progress toward these to motivate change
- involve strategies to create cascading effects (wider influence and momentum building) within the given communities or at higher levels. For example
 - ‘pyramid’ strategies that have participants extending learning and influence into networks in which they are members (such as **GT household methodologies** where champions move from working toward equity in their own household to coaching other households)
 - wider ally-building (gaining buy-in from leaders and influencers in the community and beyond, including in government or other agencies)
 - partnerships for scaling (such as nongovernmental organizations partnering in a GT methods pilot, then incorporating into their wider programming)
- are accessible to participants through interactive engagement and learning (rooted in intimate or small group dialogues, theater with some use of humor)

Differences

- Entry points ranged from spouses and households, through groups, and up to communities.
- Methods could be adapted to use an intersectional perspective, including age; at present, while some appear to have focused on adults (**household methodologies**, **GT exercises within technical training**, **GT sessions within microcredit groups**), others appear to have more room to engage youth (**community theater**, **community dialogue**), and one is explicitly youth-targeted (**Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools**).
- The development areas the methods connected to/were embedded within varied: nutrition, agriculture/aquaculture, financial services, technology development and more.
- The core mechanisms varied, from coaching/mentoring (in **household methodologies**), to facilitated experiential and interactive GT exercises and sessions (in **technical training** or **microcredit groups**, in **Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools**), to theater as behavior-change communication (in **community theatre**), to iterative group discussion and action planning (in **community dialogue**).
- Some sought synergies with women's empowerment strategies, such as assertiveness training.
- Some more than others include an explicit focus on addressing gender-based violence (e.g., **GT sessions within microcredit programs** and **Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools**).

Gaps and other insights

- Among methods that have space for youth (e.g., **community theater**, **community dialogue**) but are not specifically youth-targeted, it was not clear from the literature how inclusively these were experienced by youth, if this was sufficient, and/or how they could enhance effectiveness for youth outcomes. Youth are a particularly important demographic as potentially powerful change agents; this could be important to explore further.
- Based on the available literature, the focus of all appears to be on addressing informal barriers (constraining gender norms and dynamics). This raises the question: Is there a need for catalytic GT methods at the local level to additionally, or more explicitly or holistically, address semiformal and formal barriers?
- Several methods are already being used in many contexts and are ready to be scaled (i.e., with detailed guidance related to their use and a growing team of trained professionals able to apply them). However, the extended time commitment for their implementation—from multiple months to years—is resource-heavy and may impose limits to their scalability.
- The methods do not preclude a framing of gender that goes beyond the binary (women/men), but the resources generally did not explicitly consider a more diverse conceptualization of gender.

4.1.3. *Methods for measuring gender-transformative change*

In this section we present examples of methods that can be used in monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) to assess GT change at the local level. This is a complex area that is garnering growing attention and could be its own working paper.²⁴

As with the previous methods, we provide illustrative examples and an overview of diverse options rather than aiming to be comprehensive (table 4). The first two are of a quantitative nature, the next are qualitative. These could be combined in baselines, interim monitoring and endlines. The final method example, **outcome mapping**, is a step back to an overall MEL approach. This is an example of a MEL approach that could be applied to systematically measure change, including (but not only) transformative change, potentially using a participatory or collaborative approach.

We suggest that the examples provided here be considered as puzzle pieces, to be assembled strategically in a fit-for-purpose manner with and within appropriate MEL designs and indicators for given projects. Depending on the project aims and resources, MEL may take the shape of anything from a single case-study impact evaluation to a complex (quasi-) experimental design or randomized control trial (discussion of which is beyond the scope of this working paper).

Note that while the entry point in this section is methods for measuring GT change (i.e., changes in structures such as norms), for most programs or projects this will be one component of a larger set of intended gender-related outcomes, such as increased women's self-efficacy, decision-making (control) over resources, or distribution of benefits and burdens. As such, the methods presented here may be combined with other methods, or the methods' orientation may be expanded to include assessing other outcomes, as the GT change aspects may form only one part of a larger project or program design and aims. This is also why we include outcome mapping: as a holistic method, it illustrates a method that could capture transformative change as a part of a broader set of outcomes.

Connecting the dots between measurement and formative methods

While MEL is sometimes seen as an end-of-project-cycle practice, it is good practice to design and apply MEL at the outset. As such, MEL methods should ideally be applied starting in the early project phase (e.g., baseline) and monitoring and learning should occur throughout the project or program life cycle (interim and ongoing). With this in mind, some measurement methods may overlap with or be used as formative methods and applied longitudinally. Conversely, some of the formative methods (e.g., vignettes from **GENNOVATE**) can be applied longitudinally to become part of the MEL suite. Well-designed combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods offer triangulation and explanatory power beyond any single method type applied alone.

Table 4. Illustrative set of methods for measuring GT change

Methods oriented to assessing change in norms	
Gender attitudes and relations scales	
Examples/ resources highlighted here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple methods from the <i>Compendium of Gender Scales</i> (Nanda 2011)
Components and tools	<p>Examples include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender-Equitable Men (GEM) Scale Gender Beliefs Scale Gender Norm Attitudes Scale Gender Relations Scale
Entry points and participants	Individual respondents; most focus on relations within couples.
Mechanisms/ what it measures	<p>Scales provide a <i>quantitative</i> measure of attitudes toward gender as a proxy for norms.</p> <p>They can also indicate change in norms if applied over time.</p>
Intersectionality	The resources included in the review did not have an explicit intersectional lens. This would need to be added, including in design of sampling and analysis.
Accessibility	<p>Expertise required for effective instrument design and enumeration.</p> <p>Accessibility to respondent depends on instrument and enumerator. They do not allow respondent-led discussion (designed as surveys with predetermined response options).</p>
Scalability	<p>Readily scalable and many already in use, although less common in food systems.</p> <p>Needs adapting and testing for use in different contexts.</p>
Notes	<p>Readily combinable with other measurement frameworks and tools, such as the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)²⁵ and its spinoffs. For example, the Women's Empowerment in Fisheries and Aquaculture Index (WEFI) (Cole et al. 2020; McDougall et al. 2021d) has a built in, adapted and tested a GEM-based scale for fisheries and aquaculture sector use.</p> <p>Can be used as a quantitative tool for baseline and endline.</p>
Gender behaviors and norms assessments (quantitative)	
Examples/ resources highlighted here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Social Norms Measures</i> CARE (2017a) Guidance for formulating gendered social norms indicators (FAO et al. 2022)
Components and tools	Surveys including assessment of actual and perceived gendered behaviors, disaggregated by respondent gender.
Entry points and participants	<p>Individual respondents.</p> <p>Include assessment of community-level norms.</p>
Mechanisms/ what it measures	<p>Measures personal attitudes, social expectations and behaviors by using response scales they help set up to track change over time.</p> <p>The CARE (2017a) example includes <i>quantitatively</i> assessing: stated behaviors (what I do); empirical expectations (what I think others do); and/or normative expectations (what I think others expect me to do/what others think is appropriate behavior).</p>
Intersectionality	The included resource did not include an intersectional lens. Intersectionality could be introduced, including through sampling and analysis.
Accessibility	<p>As with the gender attitudes and relations scales method previously mentioned.</p> <p>Requires gender expertise in understanding and interpreting change in structures.</p>

Scalability	Scalable (some in use) although less common in food systems. Needs adapting and testing for different contexts.
Notes	Can be used as a quantitative tool for baseline and endline. In baseline, this could also act as a <i>formative</i> method to identify entry points for change. Note that perceptions of behaviors may be different from actual behaviors; triangulation is valuable for these, including through observation. ²⁶
Systematic assessments of norms and normative change (qualitative)	
Examples/ resources highlighted here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Social Norms Measures</i> CARE (2017a; 2017b)
Components and tools	<p>Key components of the SNAP framework are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • empirical expectations (what I think others do) • normative expectations (what I think others expect me to do) • sanctions (opinions and reactions) • sensitivity to sanctions (how much do they matter) • exceptions (when would it be okay to break the norm) <p>Integrated tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vignettes • <i>Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP) framework</i>
Entry points and participants	Individuals (through FGDs) reflecting on households, group and/or community, as appropriate.
Mechanisms/ what it measures	<p>Using the SNAP framework as an example, this method draws on formative research to <i>qualitatively</i> identifies the key aspects of a norm; this is used to develop a context-specific vignette. Vignettes are shared and discussed in FGDs.</p> <p>The SNAP framework is then applied to assess signs of changes in norms (e.g., lessening social sanctions).</p>
Intersectionality	Although the given resource was not explicitly intersectional, the sampling framework, questions and analysis could be adapted to enable intersectional analysis (e.g., FGDs with separate age or class groups, by gender).
Accessibility	<p>FGD format makes it accessible as a method for R4D, and the framework and tool are straightforward to use.</p> <p>Accessibility for participants depends on skilled formation of groups, and ability to facilitate a comfortable environment for participants.</p>
Scalability	Its use by CARE, a major international nongovernmental organization (INGO) enables scaling through the INGO and partner network.
Notes	Can be used as qualitative contribution to baseline and endline and/or interim monitoring.
Broader MEL approaches or methods that can include measurement of GT change	
Open-ended monitoring of GT outcomes (including unintended consequences)	
Examples/ resources highlighted here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including unintended consequences (Hillenbrand et al. 2015; CARE 2020) • General guidance (Hassnain and Somma 2020)
Components and tools	May include FGDs as well as formal or informal interviews. Potential to use visual tools as well, such as Photovoice. Can be triangulated with observations.
Entry points and participants	Individuals (through FGDs) reflecting on households, group and/or community, as appropriate.
Mechanisms/ what it measures	<p>Qualitative open-ended checks to assess experience and perception of changes in relation to the GT methods and strategies. Critical that participants can express not only intended and positive changes, but also any negative outcomes.</p> <p>Could include Most Significant Change tools (see Davies and Dart 2005).</p>

Intersectionality	As with assessments of normative change.
Accessibility	Requires particularly effective facilitation skills and ability to create trust with and safe spaces for participants. Accessibility for participants depends on quality of sampling (creation of groups in which participants feel comfortable), design and facilitation.
Scalability	Readily scalable in principle; in practice, projects are incentivized to gather data only on anticipated and positive outcomes.
Notes	Allows participants in GT interventions (and ideally all development and R4D interventions) to safely express concerns and have their experiences heard. Can feedback to inform the GT methods and strategies. Can be used as qualitative contribution to baseline and endline and/or interim monitoring.
Outcome mapping (or participatory outcome mapping) adapted for GT change	
Examples/resources highlighted here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Development Research Centre's Outcome Mapping approach (Earl et al. 2001) Potential indicators (Mhango et al. 2015; Hillenbrand et al. 2015)
Components and tools	Systematic identification of anticipated outcomes, linked to indicators and change in behaviors of 'boundary partners' (actors or groups with whom the project interacts and with whom the project anticipates potential influence in support of the outcome). Uses progress markers of 'expect', 'like' and 'love to see' changes.
Entry points and participants	As needed (individuals, household, community or organizations). Can be assessed at more than one level.
Mechanisms/what it measures	MEL approach, with associated frameworks and strategies. Focuses on behavioral change of boundary partners' behaviors, practices, actions, relations and so forth. Changes in gender norms and other structures could be included as a focus. As participatory monitoring, it can allow communities or groups to monitor changes in their own social relations and development aims, and how these connect. Can be empowering as a participant-designed and led process.
Intersectionality	Not presented as specifically for intersectional analysis but could be adapted for it.
Accessibility	Requires MEL, gender and facilitation skills. Accessibility to respondents depends on facilitation, but it has potential to be participatory from its design to analysis.
Scalability	The basic approach has been taken up in various ways in R4D and food systems development; the specific approaches have good potential for scaling if investment includes sufficient MEL capacities and resources.
Notes	Outcome mapping lends itself well to (self) assessing changes in gender behaviors and relations, which otherwise may go unassessed. Informs the whole MEL design. Can involve implementation over time (e.g., 6-monthly checks) as well as baseline and endline and evaluations.

Measurement methods are oriented to generating data that tracks and measures GT change in support of learning, improvement, reporting or developing recommendations.

Commonalities and key features

Examples in this set are oriented toward assessing informal gender structures (especially norms), which flows logically from the emphasis in the catalyzing stage on addressing informal barriers.

- All the methods have the potential to engage with intersectionality, depending on how they are adapted and applied.

- Several of the methods reflect that change in structures would not be the only gender-related outcome measured: **attitudes and relations scales** and **behavior and norms assessments** include changes in related aspects (gender relations, behaviors); **open-ended monitoring** and **outcome mapping** offer umbrella approaches that capture other emergent outcomes. This scope is important both in terms of capturing the breadth of gender outcomes in programs or projects (such as changes in self-efficacy, decision-making or income) and enabling insights into complex relationships between interventions, changes in structures and other outcomes.

Differences, gaps and other insights

- The accessibility of the methods is influenced by the sampling scheme and design of groups—which can favor or hinder the creation of comfortable participatory spaces (for FGDs)—and on the skillset of their implementers (facilitators).
- In that regard, the need to invest in establishing a relevant skill set among facilitators—while valuable to R4D and development overall—may pose a barrier to scaling. As is the case for nearly all methods presented in this working paper, there is limited amount of information available on the scalability; however, the methods' current use by INGOs provides a foundation.
- Overall, the methods presented demonstrate great variability. The differences suggest that there are significant questions and options for projects to navigate in creating a fit-for-purpose MEL design relating to GT change. As illustrated in figure 4, two key dimensions along which this variation occurs include:
 - **whose framing:** exogenous versus endogenous perspectives (i.e., what is assessed and are indicators identified *externally* versus *by participants*?)
 - **type of method:** qualitative or quantitative or both? Mixed methods are likely required given the complex nature of GT change—but in what balance and sequence should the mixed methods be combined?

Other key questions that projects will need to work through to design a MEL system for assessing GT change, and which the reviewed methods address differently, include:

- **breadth of what is measured:** specific (attitudes, behaviors) to wide (norms, agency, relations)
- **range:** what balance of intended vs. unintended consequences?
- **time frame:** when to measure and over what time period? Can sustainability of outcomes over time be assessed (e.g., months or years post project)?
- **indicators:** which are locally meaningful, yet can also inform beyond the site?²⁷
- As with any intervention, to assess causality (the contribution of catalytic GT methods or other interventions to outcomes) a project would need process documentation of the method's implementation as well as data on other potential contributing factors (e.g., effects of COVID-19 recovery measures) and/or apply a design (e.g., experimental) that allows for causal analysis.
- While beyond the scope of this working paper, more information would be valuable about the use of these GT MEL methods—particularly the data from them—in terms of influencing change both directly at local levels and at higher levels (such as district or national policy).
- As with the other phases, engagement with nonbinary gender identities was not generally explicit, raising the question of if and how this could be addressed in future guidance.

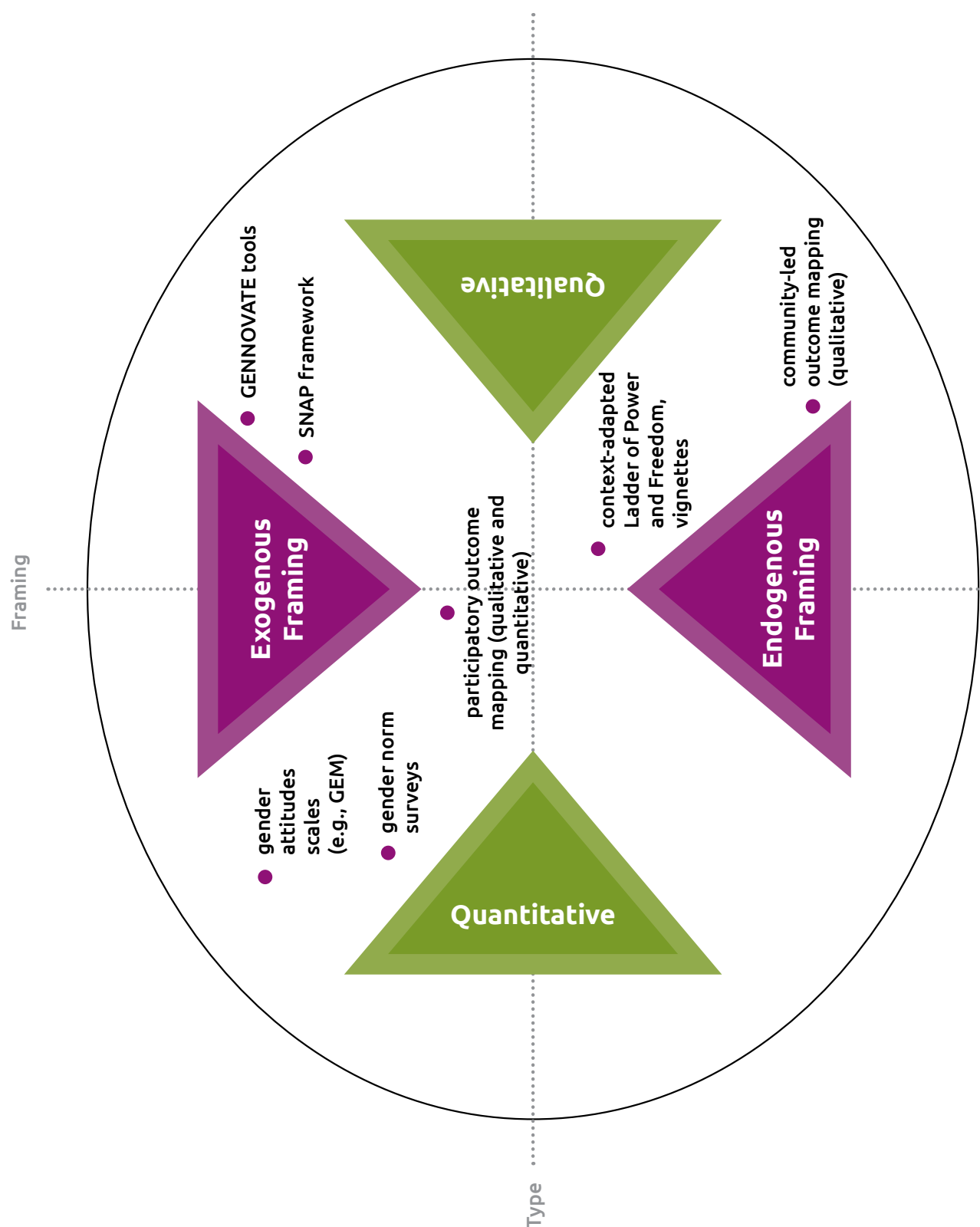


Figure 4. Examples of methods and tools for measuring GT change by framing and method type

Source: adapted from McDougall (2019).

Notes: The methods and tools would ideally engage a diverse, fit-for-purpose set of participants using an intersectional gender lens in the sampling. Also, as noted in section 4.1.3, in addition to the two axes in the figure (framing and type), the choice and design of these measurement methods and tools involves navigating decisions relating to: breadth of what is measured, anticipated to unanticipated changes, time period sufficiency, and indicator relevance (internal vs. external).

4.1.4 Putting it together at the local level: gender-transformative methods working across all project stages

Our review surfaced that several well-established programs use GT methods in a way that spans across all three project stages (formative, catalytic and measurement). Specifically, they have purposively combined methods that span across all three project stages into stepwise, tested, branded and replicable GT methodologies. We briefly highlight three of these examples here (box 5) and reflect on the nature of, and what can be learned from, GT methods and strategies that are approached holistically and programmatically in this way at the local level.

Box 5. Local-level gender-transformative methodologies that span all three project stages

Journeys of Transformation (a.k.a. Engaging Men as Allies in Women's Economic Empowerment)

Designed by Promundo with CARE and the Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC), originally around savings and loans groups, **Journeys** was subsequently adapted and scaled further. It includes a basis in rights and links to laws and policies. It starts with *formative research* through FGDs and in-depth interviews with women and men to inform the curriculum (catalytic GT intervention). As a foundation, staff capacity building focuses on critical self-reflection on their own gender attitudes. Master trainers instruct facilitators who (in the *catalytic* stage) lead the curriculum with target groups of women and their male spouses, possibly with cycles of multiple groups within a community over time. A *measurement stage* follows: firstly, monitoring (includes routinized feedback from facilitators and periodic feedback from participants) followed by a mixed-methods evaluation using tailored indicators. These generally include Gender-Equitable Men Scale scores, intimate partner violence, gendered time on care work, and men's support for women's economic activities.

Gender Action Learning System (GALS)

Created by Linda Mayoux, Oxfam Novib and local partners in multiple countries, GALS includes a human-rights dimension and is used in value chain development as well as in nutrition, climate programming and more. As a foundation, GALS strengthens the capacities of its implementing staff using "the same [local GT] tools at the institutional level for staff reflection and learning, [thus increasing] respect for the views and interests of poor women and men, challeng[ing] established attitudes and behaviors" (Oxfam Novib 2014, 10). As well as early baseline assessments for developing MEL indicators, *formative stage* assessments tailor the design for context. The *catalyzing stage* includes interactive catalyst workshops, community action learning at individual, household, group and organization levels, with iterative self-monitoring systems at each level anchoring the *measurement stage*. The phase that follows builds on the capacities and *momentum to scale* into wider groups, interventions and organizations (FAO 2021).

Social Analysis and Action (SAA)

Developed by CARE, SAA is a community-led social change process in which individuals and communities explore and challenge norms, beliefs and practices about gender and sexuality that constrain them, including sexual and reproductive rights (Mekuria et al. 2015). It is not meant to be stand-alone, but rather fits within sector-focused development programs such as agriculture or livelihoods. Its theory of change integrates transforming staff capacity, including through regular critical self-reflection as well as skills building throughout the program. SAA is grounded in *formative gender and power analysis* to inform design of the next steps. The *implementation process* involves tailored participatory GT methods and tools to spark reflexivity and awareness, as well as engage in reflective dialogues. Exercises and dialogues help envision alternatives to current gender dynamics and help turn motivation into individual and community-led action. Participatory (GT) stakeholder analysis identifies allies to build momentum around transformative change processes; group members become change agents and role models to cascade transformation beyond the SAA group. *Measuring change* is informed by the earlier gender and power analysis, assesses staff transformation, quality of implementation, and change (outcomes)—using indicators that link to external measures of equality.

Similar to the catalyzing methods (see section 4.1.2), the methodologies described in box 5 also design for intentional spillover effects beyond a single household or group. They build in pyramid or cascading strategies in which multiple groups in the same community engage in GT methods, and/or the women and men involved directly go on to be champions and change agents with other households, groups or associations. While an assessment of outcomes is beyond the scope of this working paper, these multiple, overlapping and cascading vectors of change are likely important to building, sustaining and growing GT change.

Moreover, while this would need dedicated assessment, two insights for practice that were less obvious in the ‘deconstructed’ GT examples (table 2, table 3, table 4) emerge from looking at these ‘whole project cycle’ or whole program, local-level GT methodologies (box 5). First, capacity development for GT methods and strategies may best be framed as going beyond training facilitators to technically deliver them, to also *engaging* the facilitators (if not the wider organization) in critical self-reflection about gender and one own’s biases, behaviors, learning and opportunities. This point, related to GT methods that catalyze change *within* organizations, is further explored in section 4.3; it is generally considered essential for successful implementation of GT methods and strategies. Second, together these cases suggest that *applying GT methods across project stages* involves—and adds up to—more than the sum of its three component parts (i.e., methods from each stage). Effective engagement with GT methods across stages may thus be less about adding methods per stage, and more about a holistic, programmatic approach to GT change based in an informed theory of change, which includes attention to catalyzing spillover effects, scaling and sustainability.

4.2 Review of methods and strategies at the meso and macro levels

In this section, we present a range of strategies at the meso and macro levels in support of GT change in markets, states and societies (table 5). The choice of these emergent and called-for examples has been informed and inspired by the UN Food Systems Summit’s mobilization around GT methods.²⁸ They illustrate four types of strategies.

Table 5. Gender-transformative strategies for markets, states and societies

Eliminating discrimination and enshrining equality in policy and legal frameworks and institutions	
What it is/ components	<p>Aims to identify, challenge and change the roots of inequality in policy and legal systems. Distinct from lighter-touch efforts to make policy more responsive and/ or including women as targets, this aims to eradicate discriminatory clauses, regulations or mechanisms and intentionally ensure policy and legal frameworks and mechanisms secure gender equality. May involve transforming policy processes and institutional arrangements, including changes to democratic and policymaking processes to eliminate underlying, systemic gender bias.</p> <p>At the international level, it may involve feminist foreign policy approaches and principles that intentionally target root causes of inequality (e.g., Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, Sweden's feminist foreign policy).</p>
Entry points	<p>National constitutions and national and subnational policies, regulatory frameworks and systems. Ministries and departments, including finance.</p> <p>International development policies, and the agencies in which they are embedded.</p>
Mechanisms/ how it works	<p>Draws on analysis of discriminatory aspects of policy and of the factors that drive them, including bias. Centers on intentional action to <i>eliminate formal discriminatory and patriarchal foundations</i>, including those that implicitly reinforce gender hierarchies and associated stereotypes and norms (e.g., framing women's rights and responsibilities as citizens only around identities as 'mothers', or requirements of 'guardianship' of women by men).</p> <p>Embodies policies, frameworks and mechanisms at all levels that recognize and <i>enshrine gender equality as a right</i>, including relating to women's mobility, land tenure, and bodily integrity and reproductive rights.</p> <p>At the national and subnational level, it may involve <i>intentionally and substantively transforming "the rules of the game" about who makes policy decisions</i> (addressing constraining norms, power relations and systems that entrench the inequalities in who decides).</p> <p>Feminist foreign policies reshape international policy such that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are primary goals. They include a human rights-focused foundation.²⁹ (Note that naming policy as 'feminist' is not automatically gender transformative; its design and outcomes must be transformative in nature.³⁰)</p>
Intersectionality	<p>More work is needed in this area at the national and subnational levels.</p> <p>At the international level, attention to intersectionality varies, including via a focus on the poor and most vulnerable (e.g., Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy) to an explicit intersectional lens (e.g., the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy's lens³¹).</p>
Accessibility	<p>More work is needed to understand and enhance accessibility both for policy actors and for civil society interested in shaping policy.</p> <p>See Lawless et al. (2021) for an example that may help policy actors and others better distinguish 'tinkering' with gender in (sectoral) policy from 'transformative' work in sectoral (fisheries) policy.</p>
Scalability	<p>More work is needed to not only deepen understanding of how, but especially to build political will that goes beyond token gender mainstreaming to intentional transformative change. More development of actionable strategies is needed, as well as generating information on what works (and does not and why), as well as capacity building. Momentum may be amplified through emerging case examples (see Notes).</p> <p>In international policies, there is small but significant momentum in feminist foreign policies,³² which suggests that scalability is possible, depending on political will.</p> <p>When implemented, changes in public policy have potential to effect change at scale.</p>

Notes	<p>Focus is on formal barriers (policies) and semiformal barriers (systems).</p> <p>To implement these strategies, the finance mechanisms, staffing, institutional units and systems would need to be re-organized to ensure equality is a consistent focus. Additionally, dedicated policies and interventions tackling underlying causes of inequalities would need to receive adequate and long-term resourcing (including human and financial), such as funding GT methods and strategies at all levels.³³</p> <p>International examples of feminist development policies include those from Canada and France (see CFFP [2021] for critical analysis). There are calls for feminist foreign policies to be more radical in the sense of shifting focus of foreign policy from national interests to the interests of the most vulnerable groups and addressing all forms of systemic oppression.³⁴</p>
Addressing systemic bias by changing the nature of data systems	
What it is/ components	<p>Redesigning subnational and national data systems so that they routinely generate sufficient, accurate sex- and/or gender-disaggregated data; ensuring the routine and effective use of these data in policy formulation. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addressing drivers of gender-blindness or bias in data systems (see Mechanisms) • redefining what and how data systems measure such that socio-economic contributions of all genders are valued and captured, including unpaid labor • institutionalizing robust systems that measure gender data, evidencing multidimensional progress toward (or away from) gender equality and empowerment • using the data to consistently inform policy formulation and improvement such that these have equality as a core feature and that they consistently drive progress to equity and equality
Entry points	National (and subnational) data systems and policy processes.
Mechanisms/ how it works	<p>Assessing and addressing underlying factors driving data systems gender-blindness. May include drawing on intraorganizational GT strategies (see 4.3) that help to surface and critically examine organizational and staff implicit bias (including assumptions and stereotypes).</p> <p>May involve institutionalizing data system changes that remove bias in the ‘what and how’ of data systems.³⁵ Recognizing and measuring informal and unpaid work (where women tend to dominate) as legitimate labor may be an aspect of this,³⁶ as it could lead to reduced bias in economic and social policy and increased policy incentives for care infrastructure.</p> <p>Actions are intentionally oriented to breaking the ‘cycle of invisibility’ in which sexist data systems reproduce male bias in policy and outcomes, which then reinforce constraining gender stereotypes and norms and gaps (see Criado Perez 2019; Harper et al. 2023).</p>
Intersectionality	Possible, but not necessarily explicit yet.
Accessibility	<p>More clarity on how—and cost-effective avenues—are needed.</p> <p>Similarly, capacity development on gendered statistics, intraorganizational GT strategies, as well as cross-department collaboration are required.</p>
Scalability	There is growing global momentum to address gender data gaps as a driver of inequality, including funding and strategic collaborations. If bridged effectively to national policy systems, these may support the needed capacity development—but political will is still required.
Notes	Here we focus on national data systems as flagged by UNFSS, ³⁷ but this can be tailored within food systems.

Transforming embedded bias and discriminatory structures in financial (and market) systems	
What it is/ components	<p>In contrast to strategies that seek to “fix” or “improve” women (e.g., training), these strategies for financial systems change work on a deeper level, such as addressing bias and discriminatory assumptions held by actors,³⁸ and which are embedded in criteria, rules and regulations. They are distinct from (but complement) investments in increasing the gender-responsiveness of products or services. As part of this, they fundamentally question who are seen—and invested in—as viable and valuable clients, expert service providers and legitimate leaders in the financial sector.</p> <p>In one market example, the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) (Koning et al. 2021) offers explicit norms-based strategies, including developing gender role models and sustained gender media campaigns.</p>
Entry points	Private sector, public sector, and INGO and NGO-based financial services.
Mechanisms/ how it works	<p>Complementing financial agencies’ efforts to increase responsiveness in choice and nature of financial products and services to equally serve all genders, these methods may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • change organizational policies and mechanisms to explicitly recognize women and people of nonbinary genders as equally valuable clients (and market actors), identify hidden bias in systems (rules, criteria and more) that perpetuate exclusions and gender hierarchies, and reverse these • rethink financial channels and leadership, such that financing channels and sector agents fully involve women and nonbinary people (without discrimination), including voice and leadership up to the highest levels of decision-making in financial systems and organizations • overcome unconscious bias in financial organizations and channels, and among staff/providers themselves (see 4.3) as well as other actors in markets, including families and employers (linking to local level; see section 4.1)
Intersectionality	Possible, but not necessarily explicit yet.
Accessibility	There are slowly increasing strategies and lessons that financial service companies, organizations and programs can draw on—but note that care is needed to distinguish transformative ones from the more common women’s empowerment and mainstreaming strategies. Accessibility for women depends on the specific strategies applied.
Scalability	As well as sharpening and growing the resources available, scaling would require evidence-based lessons as well as commitment and collaboration. On the latter, the UNFSS has proposed an alliance of at least 50 global and national financial institutions (e.g., companies, organizations, networks) to implement GT finance mechanisms.
Notes	<p>The essence is “making financial systems ‘women-able’ rather than making women bank-able” (Vossenberget al. 2018, 16). Note the distinction: intentional interventions to address causes of inequalities perpetuated by deep biases in the <i>financial systems, institutions, rules and underlying norms themselves</i> (transformative) versus activities that seek to change (benefit) women, such as increasing women’s access to financial services or their financial literacy.</p> <p>UNFSS³⁹ notes this is “a twofold problem”: it requires addressing confounding systemic inequities and barriers in financial <i>and</i> digital systems.</p>

Integrating GT messaging through information communication technologies (ICTs) in mainstream media and educational curricula	
What it is/	Leveraging of mass media and ICTs to offer alternatives to prevailing (constraining) norms and stereotypes that sustain gender inequality. This evolving area could include digital and educational behavior-change communication messaging (e.g., children's television, social media). ⁴⁰
components	
Entry points	Society at large; families and schools via ICTs.
Mechanisms/ how it works	<p>Drawing on lessons and progress in the field of behavior-change communication, this strategy may include leveraging gender-equal examples of real or fictional characters and dynamics portrayed in a nonthreatening way, via television programming or videos.</p> <p>In contrast to dialogues at the local level, this is less about facilitated engagement and more about disseminating disruptive ideas. These could also be embedded in school curricula, thus creating space for dialogic engagement.</p>
Intersectionality	Possible, but not necessarily explicit yet.
Accessibility	<p>Accessible to implement if required expertise and ICT partnerships in place.</p> <p>Highly accessible to people who have ICT access, though this is gendered and differs by class, age, geography, language and more.</p>
Scalability	Promising, given the reach of ICTs; however, more evidence is required. In particular, more data is needed about effectiveness and outcomes, including a critical need for information on backlash and other risks.
Notes	<p>As an example, in Bangladesh, an R4D program collaborated with a media company. They integrated characters and ideas that represented gender equality and challenged constraining gender norms and gender hierarchies into 26 episodes of a popular children's television show. The show was watched by an estimated 600,000 people (children, parents and caregivers) and received very favorable feedback.⁴¹</p> <p>Recent examples have also emerged in relation to use of TikTok to surface gender barriers in male-dominated industries.⁴²</p>

The illustrative GT methods at meso and macro levels presented here all seek to create more equitable and inclusive food systems by addressing underlying barriers to equality. In this sense, they represent going beyond business-as-usual mainstreaming or gender-responsiveness efforts, to instead target and disrupt structural drivers that otherwise re-create inequalities.

Commonalities and key features

- They all have wide potential reach and influence relative to project-level interventions, because they operate at a higher level.
- They are all highly compatible and likely synergistic with local-level GT methods (for example, to be effective, livelihood-focused interventions would need to be complemented with local-level GT methods to reduce household barriers).
- While the degree to which they are accessible to agencies who would apply them vary in a range of ways, all have in common that they are gaining attention in R4D and development as illustrated, for example, by the high levels of investment in closing gender data gaps.

Differences

- They have different entry points—from policy, to data and statistical systems, to financial services, to ICTs.
- They are for use by different actors—from national and subnational governments globally, to public, private and NGO/INGO financial service providers, to media companies. Although not very explicit in the literature, effective use may rely on (and possibly contribute to) internal transformation of the public, private or civil society agencies who would apply them (links to section 4.3). While an opportunity, this will require intentional investments and may be an initial barrier to scalability.

- They engage with different types of structural barriers—from formal (policies) to semiformal (data and financial systems) to informal barriers (norms and attitudes) that shape these.
- They leverage or operate through different change mechanisms. The first two (**policy frameworks, data systems**)—and somewhat the third (**financial systems**)—are more about leveraging transformative change at higher levels of food systems by engaging with formal or semiformal structures. The **CGAP** example in the third intentionally illustrates that transformative change in financial systems can also engage with informal structures (norms) as a leverage point (as well as changing rules, systems and organizations themselves; see section 4.3). In contrast the fourth case, **gender-transformative ICT** strategies, is more similar to local-level GT methods in that it operates through sparking increased awareness (critical consciousness) among individuals of all genders regarding otherwise invisible constraining norms, as well as possibilities for more gender-equal ways of being (informal structures).
- **Feminist foreign policies** (such as those of Sweden, France and Canada) are explicit about human rights, whereas the other strategies are not (yet).
- Given their different mechanisms and nature, the accessibility of the strategies to different actors also varies. For example, while most methods in this section are designed to be used by and directly engage actors working professionally in policy, data or finance, the ICT-based strategies may be used by INGOs, NGOs or others and would be more directly accessible to the general public (i.e., by engaging listeners and viewers, albeit shaped by digital gaps including gender).

Gaps and other insights

- In the literature on the policy and data-systems strategies, these are largely framed and communicated with an emphasis on national-scale actors and flowing from national “down” to local (e.g., policy change and then local interpretation and translation). We note here that bottom-up coalition building around gender equality would be an important related mechanism to build momentum and linkage between levels (such as through focal points within district administration offices or alliances of likeminded agencies, as outlined by Promundo [Kato-Wallace et al. 2016]). Similarly, while beyond the scope of this working paper, strategic action by civil society groups—including *but not only* women’s coalitions—holds the critical potential to influence change in policy, data and financial systems towards equality.
- While some feminist policies focus explicitly on the poorer and most marginalized segments of society, the resource materials reviewed did not explicitly address this. The strategies presented have the *potential* to address social marginalization in combination with gender (an intersectional perspective).
- Data on risks such as backlash is needed in real time and over the medium and longer term, including for behavior-change communication strategies. Work in this area on food systems should draw on existing lessons from the field of behavior-change communication.
- Similar to other levels, most materials framed gender as binary (women and men), which raises the question of if and how more can be done to be more holistic, inclusive and current in the framing of gender.

4.3 Review of methods and strategies within organizations

This section presents GT methods and strategies at the intraorganizational level. It highlights those oriented to addressing underlying drivers of inequality related to norms, cultures, systems, policies and capacities *within* R4D (and associated) agencies.

As noted earlier, this internally focused level is considered important—or even essential—as it establishes a foundation for external success. It creates an enabling environment in R4D and related organizations so that their gender-related and GT change commitments and investments grow from well-informed, aligned and fertile ground. This relationship is analogous to, but at a different level than, the point noted in section 4.1.4: those individuals seeking to facilitate GT change need to have high self-awareness regarding their own gender norms and behaviors. Here we underscore that at the intraorganizational level, organizations must ‘walk the talk’ of gender equality in order to be committed, internally and externally credible, and effective (Gilles 2015; Lokot 2021).

As noted in section 2.2.3, these methods are relevant for agencies and actors that are researching or facilitating a GT approach as part of their portfolio. Note that we do not intend to limit this level to organizations; these methods are equally relevant to networks and associations or other forms of partnerships as well.

Table 6 presents a range of methods for GT change at this intraorganizational level that were identified in the literature. These demonstrate ways to enable change within organizations in relation to workplace and program norms, cultures and so forth, rather than ways to mainstream gender in programming or activities (although the two are interconnected). Note that at this level, the resources and insights found in the literature emerged less in the form of concretely applied methods and tools, and more in the form of *frameworks and strategies*; thus, we present here accordingly.

Table 6. Strategies, frameworks, methods for fostering GT change within organizations

Building an enabling organizational culture for gender equality through data, analysis and action learning	
Components and tools	<p>Surfacing informal through to formal barriers (norms, culture, to organizational policies), it may include building blocks such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender at Work Framework to guide analysis (https://genderatwork.org/analytical-framework/; Rao et al. 2016) • Gender Action Learning System process applied within the workplace (https://genderatwork.org/gender-action-learning/)
Entry points	R4D or development organizations.
Mechanism/ how it works	<p>May involve a range of data generation and MEL tools⁴³, such as staff surveys, interviews, pay gap assessment or document reviews, followed by staff (focus group) joint reflection and discussions to interpret and plan actions.</p> <p>The Gender at Work Framework can support analysis, interpretation and identifying opportunities.</p> <p>Organizations may draw on these tools to engage in capacity development and building an internal change agenda (culture), possibly using a facilitated Gender Action Learning approach. This includes: mapping organizational history, capacities and potential directions; building a learning community and understanding individual, community and organizational change; developing and catalyzing change projects led by participants; and project and collective learning to inform next steps.</p>
Intersectionality	Possible, but not explicit.

Accessibility	The Gender at Work Framework and approach are accessible for both facilitators (with training) and participants.
Scalability	High potential for scaling if there is commitment among the leadership and across the organization, and if funding is invested for a structured, long-term, facilitated process.
Notes	The 'project cycle' stages framework (formative, catalyzing, measurement GT methods) presented for the local level (see 2.2.1) could also be applied in this type of method.
Gender capacity development and organizational culture approach	
Components and tools	As laid out in the <i>Gender Capacity Development and Organizational Culture Change in the CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems: A Conceptual Framework</i> (Sarapura Escobar and Puskur 2014), this approach focuses on building capacity and shifting culture (including attitudes) through to systems and policies . It applies strategies of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blended learning • cascade coaching
Entry points	R4D or development organizations and staff.
Mechanism/ how it works	Draws on transformative learning, multilevel change frameworks and organizational culture and learning theory. Lays out three interconnected pathways, capacity areas and levels: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. individual staff capacity development through personal reflection and awareness and technical capacities ii. organizational transformation including leadership that promotes equality iii. systems transformation through partnerships, networks and alliances enabling GT change
Intersectionality	Includes reference to diverse cultural identity; could be made more explicit.
Accessibility	Lesser known as a framework, but the component parts are well-known accessible.
Scalability	It offers a coherent base that is potentially scalable within CGIAR and beyond if commitment and funding are invested. It is not known if it has been applied as a whole yet.
Notes	The framework was designed for a CGIAR research program and thus is oriented to R4D organizations in particular.
Transforming staff capacity including mindset, through reflection and learning using GT tools	
Components and tools	Using the intraorganizational aspect of the SAA methodology developed by CARE (Mekuria et al. 2015) here as an example, we flag two main components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transform staff capacity, in terms of self-awareness regarding gender and own attitudes and behaviors, through GT tools (exercises). • Incorporate learning through routinized monitoring and use of evaluation data (relating to gender approaches, methods and outcomes), especially to challenge assumptions about depth and sustainability of gender outcomes.
Entry points	Staff of the lead organization (within and beyond GT project teams).
Mechanisms/ how it works	Staff capacity sessions involve strengthening ability to self-reflect on own gender biases and behaviors (as well as how to facilitate GT methods/methodologies and tools). These may include GT tools used in local GT methods and methodologies, such as drawing, fishbowl technique and facilitated dialogue. Can occur before GT programming starts, but also repeatedly on a regular, iterative basis. <p>SAA takes a whole program cycle approach (over time) so that staff capacities are also developed (and programming improved) through routinization of reflection and learning.⁴⁴</p> <p>The comprehensive SAA approach includes MEL of staff transformation (CARE 2020).</p>
Intersectionality	The SAA notes some intersectional aspects in its guiding questions.

Accessibility	As it builds on well-established reflexive processes, including those that the organizations facilitate in the field, it is accessible as long as there is sufficient facilitative capacity.
Scalability	Reasonably scalable, although additional open access resources or training of trainers may increase accessibility. The primary factor in scaling of this (and other intra-organization) methods is likely to be commitment, including from the top leadership of the organization.
Notes	<p>This foundational aspect of SAA focuses on transforming staff capacity in order to set up internally for external success (SAA programming with communities).</p> <p>See also Promundo's Journeys of Transformation (Promundo and CARE Rwanda 2012) for related methodological approaches and ideas.</p>

The methods for GT change at the intraorganizational level illustrated in table 6 seek to create an internal foundation for external success with and through GT programming (e.g., with communities). To this end, they all employ strategies within the organization and with staff to generate more gender-equal environments and enabling cultures, including gender related self-awareness.

Common characteristics, key features and differences

- All reflect a common foundation of applying a GT approach within the organization (i.e., seeking to identify and transform the underlying drivers of inequalities that are embedded and naturalized in the organization itself, including bias and unequal power relations).
- To operationalize this, all apply GT methods (and tools) internally to create organizational change. These focus on building internal reflexive processes as well as some form of action learning.
- All go beyond mainstreaming gender knowledge and skills. They expand to include situational understanding and moving toward addressing constraining gender norms, dynamics and barriers embedded within the organization and its systems.
- All frame staff capacity to include self-awareness in relation to gender and power (which links to norms and unconscious bias). This complements building specific technical knowledge and capacities for designing, implementing and monitoring GT methods in programming:
 - understanding of critical concepts (such as masculinities)
 - knowledge about the epistemological basis of a transformative approach
 - skills to facilitate GT methods and tools, and to build MEL for GT change
- To be effective, all would require strong organizational commitment to addressing drivers of inequities and inequalities, and to change at a deeper underlying level (particularly from leaders). Acquiring buy-in from these leaders and resources to support their application is essential for scaling these methods.
- The methods are all potentially accessible to participants as long as there is sufficient capacity to apply them skillfully, and time among participants to engage with them thoughtfully.
- They all challenge R4D and development in terms of gender—as not only a topic, goal or technical area of expertise—but also an interconnected personal and cultural phenomenon.
- There is some intersectionality, but it is not very explicit in the resources found for this review.
- They differ in maturity; some have traction and visibility already (e.g., Gender at Work).
- As with other levels, the resources were not very explicit about gender beyond the binary categories of women and men.

5. Discussion: insights at and across levels

Power relations between men and women are complex, multidimensional and pervasive, [and therefore,] a diversity of tools and angles are needed to disentangle and contest them.

(Lewis 2002, 7)

This discussion shares insights in three parts:

- First, we start by unpacking insights relating to GT methods and strategies at each of the three levels (local, through meso and macro, to within organizations) while reflecting specifically on the three dimensions of intersectionality, accessibility and scalability.
- Second, we surface commonalities or differences in GT methods and strategies across the three levels and highlight broader insights that emerge from looking across levels.
- Finally, we return and respond to the key question presented in the introduction: *How do current and emerging GT methods and strategies inform the understanding and framing of transformative change of food systems toward equality at scale?*

5.1 Methodological insights at each level

5.1.1 Insights at the local level

Overall, local-level GT methods (section 3.1) spanned engagement with households, groups and/or communities across different development areas, including nutrition and livelihoods. These local methods indicate a strong focus on shifting informal drivers, such as constraining gender norms. While wider and systematic assessment would be required, this raises the question of whether more investment is needed at this local level in terms of complementary GT methods or strategies that address semiformal and formal drivers, such as local systems and regulations (e.g., customary tenure or land and property registration).

We note also that while section 4 listed local-level methods by project stages to elucidate their primary functions, we recommend that programs and projects design for and invest in GT methods holistically—*across the whole project cycle*—to most effectively plan, catalyze and monitor change in gender inequality.

Intersectionality, accessibility, scalability

Intersectionality. The review found a mixed and relatively limited degree of explicit information on the engagement with intersectionality among the GT methods and tools reviewed. While a systematic review may show otherwise, this suggests more explicit attention may be needed in this area.

Accessibility. Methods and tools at the local level appear to be relatively accessible to both R4D practitioners and participants. Many methods and tools are now available online and use forms of facilitated dialogic reflection techniques that are relatively familiar to participatory social science researchers and to communities. Based on the literature and key informant interviews, users of such methods appear to engage in peer-to-peer sharing of their learning, which improves accessibility. Accessibility is plausibly relatively high for

participants (including marginalized groups) due to the methods' intentional orientation toward inclusion in targeting, design and facilitation; however, this is difficult to assess based on literature. Accessibility no doubt varies from method to method. For example, those that involve large groups may be less comfortable for participants to speak up in than methods that use smaller groups—especially for less powerful participants. It is also highly dependent on the skills of the facilitators to create an inclusive and safe environment, especially for people of marginalized gender and/or social groups.

Scalability. Scalability of local-level GT methods and tools so they reach more people and are applied in new contexts is well-established for several methods that have been piloted and/or assessed and scaled. For example, **GALS** appears to have enough momentum already to continue to adapt and scale out to other contexts; **Nurturing Connections** has built momentum since its piloting. While it is too early to know, several other methods appear promising as they rely on known and accessible skill sets (such as facilitating inclusive discussions and action-reflection cycles). To be effective, scaling requires that commitments and investments in gender equality in R4D and food systems are substantive going forward (not token—see next paragraph on challenges).

In terms of *opportunities for scaling*, we identify that:

- There is a clear possibility for uptake of local GT methods and methodologies by actors who have not previously used them, such as INGOs or NGOs working in food systems or on environmental issues. It seems likely that there is also scope for integration in existing development and social programming related to (but outside of) food systems R4D, such as integrating GT methods into rapidly growing government social protection programs, including cash transfers (FAO 2020).
- However, as Wong et al. (2019) discussed, and as suggested by the analysis above, there are *numerous challenges to effectively scaling* GT methods and methodologies. These include the extended time requirements and the intensive resource requirements for effective participatory processes (financial and human resources, in particular, skilled and experienced facilitators with contextual knowledge).
- Concerns about these challenges (and reluctance of R4D organizations or funders to invest) may be offset somewhat as evidence emerges about the ultimate cost-effectiveness of GT methods relative to business-as-usual approaches. For example, a recent study (CARE Burundi and the Africa Centre for Gender, Social Research and Impact Assessment 2021)⁴⁵ found greater return on investment from GT project design (and methods) than from those based in the more common gender-accommodative designs (and methods). Additionally, 'bundling' local GT methods with technological innovations shows promise as a pathway to scaling, as these innovations have their own mechanisms, funds and momentum for scaling on which GT methods might piggyback. However, this bundling and scaling of GT methods with technological innovations is not without risks, including the danger that methods (and programming) will be gender-transformative in name only, or designed and facilitated technocratically, which risks their legitimacy and ability to effect meaningful change.

5.1.2 Insights at the meso and macro levels

At the meso and macro levels, a range of GT strategies or methods emerged. Those relating to state and markets were arguably more strategies than methods per se, focusing on policy and systems change for wider societal outcomes; in contrast, the ICT-based ones more broadly resemble local *catalyzing GT methods* in their design and focus (on norms).

This prioritizing of formal and semiformal structures within the state and market spheres to date raises the question of if this is sufficient, or if more should be done to amplify GT methods that address informal barriers at this higher level. Emerging literature has called for this, as underscored by Malhotra et al. (2019, S13) in the field of reproductive health:

Effectively addressing gendered power dynamics requires expanding the scope of ... social norms programming beyond the remit of individual, group or community interventions, currently driven largely by social and behavior change programming; rather, we must enhance investments in interventions that leverage the scale and impact of structural drivers. We provide a preliminary frame for doing so by mapping structural drivers of social norm change at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels.

Pathways for this may be relatively new but are being charted through novel thinking, such as frameworks considering norms at multiple levels (Pulerwitz et al. 2019) and supporting change in 'meta norms' (Lawless et al. 2020).

Intersectionality, accessibility, scalability

It would be premature to conclusively assess these dimensions of interest, given that the methods and strategies included are only now emerging and are noticeably different from one another. Nonetheless, we can make the following observations.

Intersectionality. Intersectionality is evident in the discourse around feminist policies, which reflects the significance of intersectionality as a core concept in many streams of feminism. Its translation into practice will depend on follow through and capacities. We anticipate it may be particularly difficult to rapidly include meaningful consideration of intersectionality in data systems, as progress toward systematic sex-disaggregation and consistent generation of gender data has so far been slow (even within SDGs). As such, there may be additional institutional resistance to the potential or perceived complexities or costs of layering in an intersectional lens.

Accessibility. Digital and educational messaging piggybacks on existing media and is thus available (and accessible) to a significant proportion of people in many country contexts. That being said, access may be hindered by pre-existing gender and social inequities and gaps, including in digital access and control. We also note that the ICT strategy (table 5) is particularly interesting in terms of its potential to directly engage youth and children of all genders, and thus may accelerate social transformation. In terms of limiting factors, the relative lack of clear, tested and readily adapted strategies (and guidance) currently at this level may hinder accessibility.

Scalability. Feminist and related policies have seen growth already. Scaling of these and transformative strategies in data systems will rely directly on securing and/or maintaining political and techno-bureaucratic will, as well as associated resource and capacity investments.

ICT-related GT methods and strategies could be scaled to reach significant numbers through integration into existing platforms, including in relation to financial services and in digital messaging and media. As well as public sector commitment, these will also depend on the will and mobilization of private sector interests. This flags the private sector as a potentially important—but so-far under-assessed—actor in alliance-building for GT change. Questions thus arise about the need for novel partnerships in development and R4D, such as with public and private sector media. Spinoff questions include: If these private-public partnerships are developed, how can accountability and civil society voice be ensured in these spaces, especially of women, nonbinary people and people of marginalized social groups?

Additionally, we suggest that across all strategies at this level, limitations to scaling are also created by a lack of experience and evidence to date. These strategies and their scaling have not yet been sufficiently explored and assessed to allow the necessary momentum, including the cost-benefit data that will likely be important to this group of stakeholders. Central to this need for evidence is more thorough assessment of risks (such as potential backlash) and how to navigate them in current sociopolitical climates.

5.1.3 Insights within organizations

There are a range of identified strategies and methodologies for use by development and R4D organizations at this intraorganizational level. As introduced earlier, these are rooted in the principle that for GT change in food systems to be effective, *those engaging in R4D and development work* need to begin by questioning themselves and their own perceptions, assumptions and biases. While specific analysis is beyond the scope of this review, it is likely not a coincidence that agencies that appear to have most successfully implemented local GT methods across project stages (e.g., CARE, Oxfam, Promundo), also appear to have been front-runners in seeking transformative change within their organizations.

Intersectionality, accessibility, scalability

Intersectionality: There is need and high potential to address intersectionality, but the examples of GT methods and strategies assessed at this within-organization level were not explicit in engaging with it.

Accessibility: To potential R4D and development users, strategies and methodologies at this level may seem less visible and established, and thus less accessible than local-level GT methods. More specifically, we also note that intraorganizational GT methods and strategies overlap with strategies for organizational leadership and change, as well as for gender and diversity in the workplace. It is unknown at this stage whether this overlap will increase accessibility and build the necessary GT strategies and commitment, or if it will create confusion or dilute the efficacy of GT methods and strategies.

Moreover, in R4D organizations, there is also the risk that organizations operating across regions and cultures, and/or those that are technology-oriented and thus steeped in the biophysical sciences, may be reticent to engage with culture and normative change processes. We speculate that commitment to GT methods and strategies at this level may also be limited by the wider R4D and development environment and climate—in particular, that funding tends to be available for and focus on projects and their short-term (external) outputs and outcomes, rather than institutional strengthening as a foundation for longer-term progress towards equity and sustainability.

Scalability: The slower growth and scaling of intraorganizational GT methods and strategies compared to local-level GT methods may also mean the former are relatively less scalable at present. This suggests a need for development of clear case studies of use of intraorganizational GT methods and strategies, including evidence of outcomes. Perhaps even more salient is that actors of all genders—especially men—will need to be motivated to invest in applying and scaling GT change processes.

Moreover, the lower recognition and investment in the intraorganizational level (despite it being a precondition for external success) raises the question: Since external incentives (including funding) for GT programming and GT methods appear to contribute to the momentum of local-level GT methods, is a relative absence of external incentives for intraorganizational GT strategies and methods a barrier to momentum at this level? A related question (also beyond the scope of this paper, for future investigation): *How can funding agencies incentivize the scaling of intraorganizational GT methods and strategies?* Connecting to the above, how can organizations, funding agencies and other actors incentivize diverse men to engage as agents of change for gender equality in their organizations and work?

Finally, we note a potential enabler: the effective use of MEL may not only inform, but also motivate organizational investments. As one agency learned through MEL, their own earlier project models had relatively limited gender outcomes despite long-term gender mainstreaming. They applied this learning to inform organization-wide rethinking and change processes toward long-term programming with a GT approach as a core strategy, including staff capacity and internal enabling cultures.⁴⁶ Along these lines, it appears promising that greater use of gender evidence may contribute to the motivation that organizations need for self-reflection and internal innovation.

5.2 Observations across all levels

Here we reflect briefly *across* all three levels, surfacing insights for practice.

- Across all levels and GT methods and strategies, the most common mechanism at play is some form of reflexivity connected to an action learning cycle. Reflexivity enables the invisible or normalized inequalities and their causes to become visible through individual and social learning. In the language of social theory, reflection (through action learning) enables agency (commitment to and action toward more equal relations and behaviors) to disrupt persistent inequitable structures (such as constraining norms). This underscores that GT methods and strategies do not work through application ‘on’ or ‘to’ people; rather they create the space, motivation and opportunities for people themselves to drive positive systemic change toward equality.
- Human rights, particularly of women and girls, are explicitly foundational in several of the examined GT methods and strategies. More broadly, if considered through an intersectional lens, an underlying theme that emerges is this: the drive toward equality that is sought through the use of GT methods and strategies is directly (albeit sometimes still implicitly) interconnected with a drive toward the fulfillment of universal human rights. As such, it may be valuable to sharpen thinking and language around the connections of rights and GT approaches, methods and strategies. This includes more explicitly recognizing the fundamental importance of *social value systems*⁴⁷ (in particular gender and social hierarchies implicitly ascribing greater worth to some humans) that underlie gender norms as core informal drivers of inequality. (While value systems and norms are related, they are not interchangeable concepts or terms).
- At all levels, responsibility for driving change through GT methods and strategies is clearly ascribed not only to women, but rather to women and men together. While this was most explicitly articulated in the literature on the local-level GT methods, success at other levels is similarly unfeasible without full co-ownership and championing by men. Thus, amplifying the engagement of men as co-change agents towards equality at higher levels and within organizations emerges as a priority area to continue to grow. This complements, but cannot be substituted by, ongoing investments in women’s networks and empowerment.
- Given that the literature reviewed largely used a binary framing of gender identity, a central issue for GT methods and strategies is to expand the framing of gender beyond ‘women and men’ toward recognizing a multiplicity of gender identities and considering these within the struggle for gender equality.
- The lack of attention to intersectionality and reporting on how to operationalize it was common across levels in the GT methods and strategies reviewed. While a systematic review would be required to confirm this, it is plausible that a current lack of explicit intersectionality in these GT methods and strategies may be a barrier to achieving their full potential. As the COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated in a multitude of contexts, multiple dimensions of marginalization (such as Indigeneity, disability, poverty, statelessness and so forth) are intertwined at all societal levels; the convergence of overlapping discriminations manifest in particularly acute inequities and vulnerabilities. This may be an area to which R4D can contribute as it generates evidence of what works (and does not), for whom and where in the use of GT methods and strategies.
- It seems likely that success at the local, meso and macro, and intraorganizational levels requires co-ownership and commitment by multiple types of actors (organization types). This may also require new collaborations and multilevel strategies. For example, moving toward equality in land tenure may involve legal reforms that rely on civil society inputs and driving negotiations with the state; depending on context and wider land or aquatic area claims, actualizing these may also involve negotiations with private sector or conservation INGOs. This would likely also require awareness-building about rights by civil society organizations, champions and facilitators that support marginalized women (and

people of all genders) in actualizing their rights. It would additionally involve building relationships with traditional and religious leaders, as these rights are translated into practice at the juncture of legal frameworks and traditional and religious customs and practices.

- In terms of capacities, skills and knowledge, what emerged as valuable was a breadth of expertise beyond that associated only with gender mainstreaming. This includes gender theory (such as distinguishing accommodative from transformative), participatory processes and action learning, as well as understanding of interactions across levels (drawing on complex systems thinking or socioecological models). Moreover, the review surfaced as centrally important a diverse set of nontechnical skills and knowledge, such as personal and organizational self-awareness of gender bias and privilege (and recognizing our own patterns and blind spots), as well as understanding of how social change happens. MEL capabilities tailored to GT change at and across all levels will also be critical to provide effective evidence for continuous learning and improvement, including monitoring potential unintended consequences.
- Looking across levels elucidates that the range of GT methods and strategies together address formal, semiformal and informal structural barriers. At the same time, methods applied at specific levels lean more toward one than the other. For example, local methods lean toward norms (informal), and higher-level methods lean toward policy (formal) and systems (semiformal). Going forward, it will be valuable to assess whether this is optimal or if a more balanced mix of attention within each level would be useful, especially ensuring attention to unacknowledged informal structures (gender norms and values [hierarchies]) that shape higher levels, such as in policymaking or climate negotiations.
- Finally, a key takeaway is this: examination of the methods and strategies underscores that effecting GT change in food systems is not about a single best method, phase, actor or even one level in isolation. Rather, as gender inequities and inequalities are manifest in relations and institutions across levels and in dynamic ways,⁴⁸ purposively catalyzing GT change will involve:
 - a complex of interlinked processes and multiple actors
 - (adaptive) planning for multiphase projects and processes
 - evidence building
 - amplifying outcomes and scaling through collaborations, alliances and coalition-building⁴⁹
- In other words, as illustrated in figure 5, designing effective GT investments with the aim of achieving gender equality at scale in food systems is about tapping into established principles and mechanisms of transformative (social and gender) change, and designing (a combination of) fit-for-purpose methods and strategies in an integrated way *across project/program stages and across levels, with multiple co-owners and people of all genders, to create synergies and momentum.*

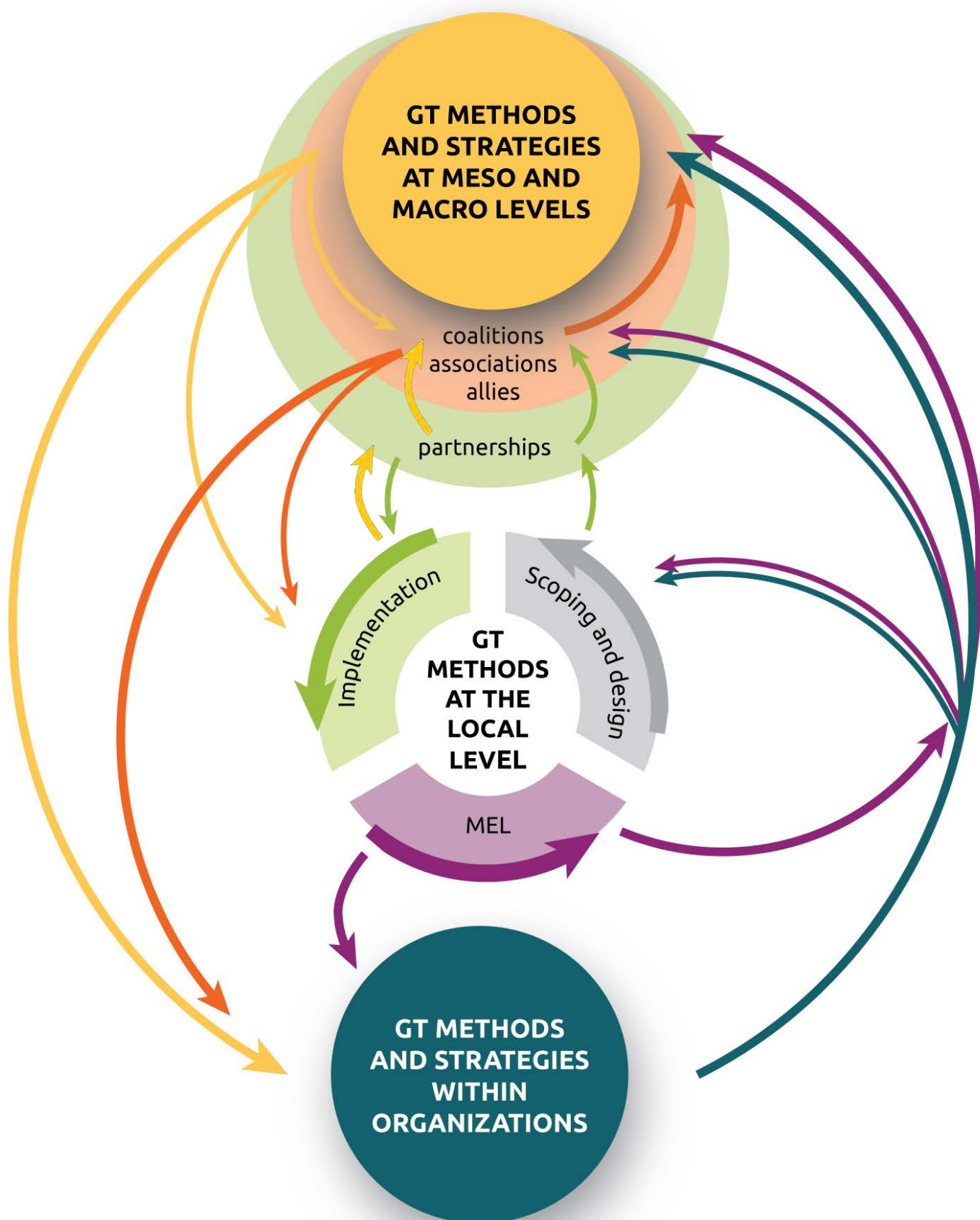







Figure 5. GT methods and strategies interconnecting across levels: complex, multi-actor processes enabling system-wide change

Source: original figure, drawing on Sarapura Escobar and Puskur (2014); Cole et al. (2014); UNFPA (2020).

Legend

-  An organizational environment that ‘walks the talk’ enables effective GT methods in programming by enhancing commitments, investments and budgets, as well as knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors, and internal and external legitimacy.
-  Evidence and learning from MEL informs practice, and motivates and builds momentum for GT methods and strategies and investment at local, meso and macro, and intraorganizational levels.
-  Direct involvement of meso and macro actors (state, private and NGOs/INGOs, civil society organizations) as partners in local GT pilots and projects supports local environments that foster GT change and enable scaling of GT methods to new contexts.
-  Momentum builds from niches (local and pilots) through ‘champions’ and allies (formal and informal leaders) who advocate and feed lessons into networks and associations (scaling), and through coalition-building among multiple groups such that they can use collective voice and action to influence change at scale. This ideally contributes to more inclusive governance and change processes and more equitable distribution of power between civil society, the state and the private sector.
-  Equality- and equity-based policies and systems set a social standard and expectation for recognition of women’s rights (and human rights more broadly) by regulating appropriate behavior and influencing actors at all levels (e.g., private-sector financing and public data systems).

Across all levels: Engaging men and boys, and people of all genders as co-agents and owners of change toward gender equality.

5.3 Reconceptualizing pathways for gender-transformative change in food systems: scaling out, up and in

The results section explored methods and strategies at each of the three levels outlined in the conceptual framework. Here, we return to the overarching question of the working paper: *How do current and emerging GT methods and strategies inform the understanding and framing of transformative change of food systems toward equality at scale?*

The insights suggest that R4D and development actors need to engage with this related but nuanced question: *How can we usefully conceptualize pathways to creating GT change in food systems as a whole, addressing multilevel, nested structural constraints?* In other words, in a systems perspective, *what pathways may lead toward GT change in food systems?*

Looking at the nature of the GT methods and strategies at the different levels at present suggests that scaling GT change needs to be understood differently for each level. For example, food-systems R4D and programming can readily (given sufficient capacity and investment) reach more households and communities through replication and adaptation of existing and emerging GT methods and tools. But on its own, this scaling out of GT methods would leave barriers at higher levels unaddressed. Moreover, scaling transformative change in relation to markets, states and society will require different forms of commitment and investments, as will change within organizations.

This suggests that R4D and food-systems actors need to think in terms of three interconnected forms or pathways of scaling, as illustrated in figure 6. These are:

1. **Scaling out:** *Food-system actors can expand GT change horizontally.* There are multiple valuable *local-level* GT methods and tools that exist (and more that will emerge) that can and should be adapted and scaled out to ever larger numbers of localities—households, groups and communities. R4D and development programming and projects should usefully invest in these to build momentum for equality ‘from the bottom up’ in food systems.
2. **Scaling up:** *Food-systems actors can usefully ‘move up’ their thinking (and actions) regarding where GT change is needed in food systems.* While it is critical to reach more and more households, groups and communities, as outlined above, these are themselves embedded in and influenced by higher-level systems and associated agencies and actors. While investments in local-level GT methods may have some influence on markets, states and wider society through evidence, role modeling, partnerships, coalitions and more, this will not be sufficient for systems change. Fully addressing the structural barriers to gender equality in food systems will require investments in methods and strategies that transform constraints directly at the *meso and macro level*. Scaling up in this way will require distinct commitments and learning-oriented investment to grow and apply the emerging meso- and macro-level GT strategies and methods by governments and private, quasi-governmental and civil society actors.
3. **Scaling in:** *Food-systems actors can usefully look ‘within’ as a priority sphere where GT change needs to take place.* Even as R4D and food-systems agencies and actors invest in activities for scaling out and up, the foundation for transformative change at scale needs to be laid by these agencies and actors *transforming themselves*. As such, the third pillar is ‘scaling in’. This refers to catalyzing change processes that eliminate the roots of inequality that lurk and linger *within R4D and development organizations and research and innovation processes themselves* (including public-, private- and civil society-based). Returning to this working paper’s focus on R4D and development, this calls for a shift in mental models in R4D and development, from thinking of pathways to gender equality as ‘out there’ to ‘in here’—within ourselves and our organizations, processes, relations and partnerships.

Each form of scaling is important, but insufficient on its own. GT change at its most effective is likely multilevel, multidimensional, nonlinear and involves the influence of diverse actors from multiple spheres (see Kantor and Apgar 2013; Hillenbrand et al. 2015). The three forms of scaling—out, up and in—reflect this. As mutually reinforcing processes of change, implementing them simultaneously can create positive feedback across food systems at different levels. This may both accelerate and sustain progress toward gender equality in food systems.

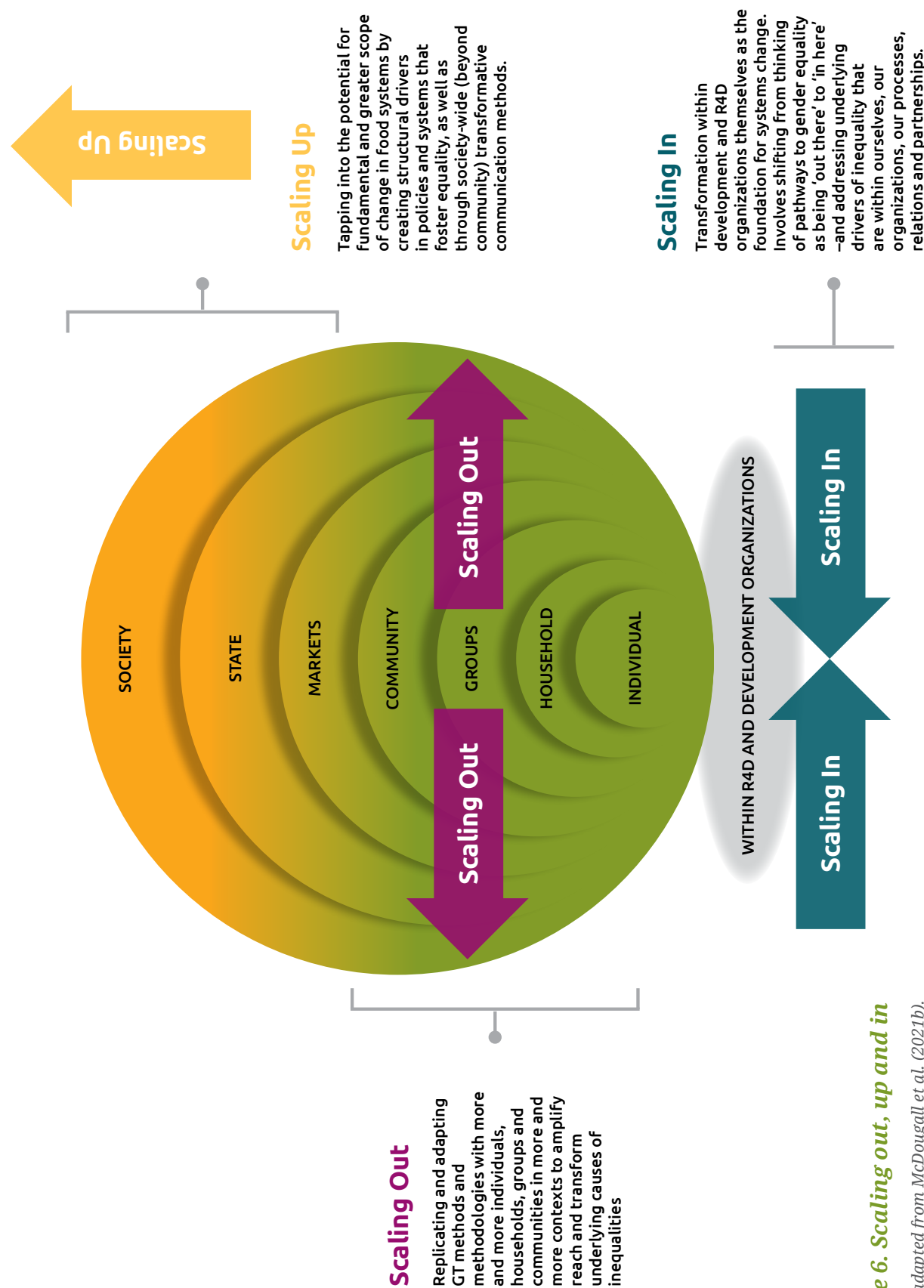


Figure 6. Scaling out, up and in

Source: adapted from McDougall et al. (2021b).

6. Conclusions and looking ahead

Having explored GT methods and strategies at the local, meso and macro, and intraorganizational levels, we conclude with five takeaway messages for ensuring impactful GT change in food systems.

- 1. Transition to GT methods and strategies with a purposive, stepwise approach.** Taking a GT approach represents a significant deepening of engagement with gender in R4D and development in food systems. As such, as R4D and development agencies and actors respond to the call for GT change, they will need to avoid the risk of simply or rapidly rebranding existing women-targeting and accommodative methods and strategies as gender transformative. Such a reductive approach would be unsuccessful in terms of sustained outcomes impacts; more broadly, it would dilute the intention and potency of the gender-transformative approach in the sector. We recommend instead that agencies and actors take a purposive, stepwise approach to transitioning to (incorporating) GT methods and strategies. This includes prioritizing sufficient time to develop deep understanding and secure organizational commitment to change at the level of root causes, avoiding sweeping claims or rushed transitions in design, implementation, MEL and communications. In other words, agencies and actors need to embark on this journey with a recognition that the transition to GT approaches is about a **change in substance, not a change in name only**—and that this requires long-term investment and rethinking development assumptions and investments.
- 2. Anchor GT investments (and their methods and strategies) in explicitly transformative outcomes and core principles.**
Rather than focusing only on “steps” in the methods, strategies or tools, we recommend maintaining substance by explicitly anchoring GT investments at all levels in **core principles**. In particular:
 - Be intentional about gender-transformative change as the aim, intended outcome and basis for investments and programming. This means focusing commitments and investments on *addressing underlying structures* (i.e., the informal, semiformal and formal root causes of gender inequality), not on targeting or ‘fixing’ women or ‘working around’ gender barriers.
 - Ensure that programming and projects *spark awareness* (critical consciousness) regarding ‘invisible’ barriers; drivers; and normalized, systematized inequalities. Moreover, ensure that they *generate internal motivation, options and opportunities for ‘deep’ change—as well as operationalize these collaboratively, scaling out, up and in, at and across multiple levels.*
 - Commit to, invest in and role model *engaging men and women, boys and girls, and people of nonbinary genders as co-agents and champions of change for gender equality.*
- 3. Within the above, use effective mechanisms and design features in GT methods and strategies.**
More concretely, we advise drawing on key GT mechanisms and design features, especially but not only, at the local and intraorganizational levels.

These include:

- linking to point 1, investing sufficient time and funds for effective GT methods and strategies, and building the needed multifaceted capacities (including soft skills and mindsets)
- leveraging reflection-action-reflection cycles for learning and improvement
- adapting to (and being informed about) the specific context
- applying an intersectional lens (see point 4)
- in projects and programs, designing GT methods to work in an integrated way across all formative, implementation and evaluation stages (and at the intraorganizational level, across organization cycles)
- using accessible, inclusive, participatory methods and tools that engage fit-for-context reflexivity and action learning as core change mechanisms
- employing gender-balanced and diverse facilitators and team leaders and staff who have the needed commitment and capacities
- developing role models and change agents, and engaging powerful allies (of all genders, diverse social groups)
- navigating decisions about MEL and use of evidence to find the right balance of external data, internal information, voice and empowerment, and learning and improvement

4. Approach transformation from a 'gender-by-social' perspective.

While keeping the focus on gender as a primary axis of inequality in food systems, it is important to put energy into the nuances of how gender and social inequalities (relating to class, caste, ethnicity, disability and so forth) interact. Considering intersectionality systematically in GT methods and strategies can include the following:

- **Design:** Shape the GT methods and strategies to respond to the needs and experiences of socially diverse people (of all genders), especially the least powerful who experience compounding discriminations or marginalizations.
- **Processes:** Design and facilitate for accessibility, engaging the most marginalized people equitably in the methods, adapting as needed.
- **Analysis:** Sample and assess in relation to *intersecting* social and gender categories (using appropriate sample size) to shed light on patterns and divergent experiences of power or marginalization, and what drives, compounds or shifts them.
- **Frameworks and methods:** R4D can develop and test scalable, intersectionality-focused frameworks, strategies and practices to strengthen an intersectional lens in GT methods and strategies.

In connection with the above, seek to clearly identify and make explicit the human rights dimensions and opportunities of GT methods and strategies.

5. Learn from the growing base of method and strategy models at relevant levels.

Last but not least, it will be valuable for R4D and development agencies and actors to learn from and build on the growing base of method and strategy models, and the growing evidence and insights. This includes learning from applications of GT methods and strategies at different levels regarding what works (and what does not), for whom, why and in which contexts. Doing so will enable programs to be effective in their investments in GT methods and strategies as these will be based on informed design, even as they are adapted and improved. Working from the strengths and limitations of existing models is also necessary to avoid reinventing the wheel—and avoid slowing progress towards equality by replicating errors of the past decades. Overall, starting from what has been learned in previous projects and programs can accelerate learning about how and why lasting structural change happens, thus informing and enabling progress in food systems R4D.

In conclusion, we reflect that continuing to invest in GT methods at the more established local level is critically important—yet this alone will not be sufficient. **GT methods and strategies at the meso and macro, and intraorganizational levels are also critically needed for food-systems transformation at scale.**

More broadly, as surfaced through this working paper’s reflection on existing methods and strategies, there is a need to reconceptualize our understanding in R4D and development regarding how to catalyze transformative change at scale. Based on insights from this working paper, we propose that what is needed at this juncture are focused investments in ***scaling out, scaling up*** and ***scaling in gender-transformative change***, and **purposive linkages between levels**. It is through such **purposive, multifaceted, multilevel and collaborative efforts that we may create a much-needed tipping point** toward social and gender equality in food systems.

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ANNEX 1. KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Empowerment: Overall, empowerment can be understood as “increasing the personal, political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities” (UNICEF 2017, 1). More specifically, it relates to “expansion of people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them” (Kabeer 1999, 437); this includes the ability to transform choices into desired actions and outcomes. Women’s empowerment can thus be understood as relating to women’s ability to expand power and control over their own lives (UN Women 2001).

Gender: Gender is a socially constructed concept, in contrast to the biological category of sex. In R4D and development it generally refers to the attributes, roles, and expectations associated with being a woman or man, or a girl or boy, including notions of femininity or masculinity, and the associated power relations. In development, gender identities are increasingly understood in terms of a multiplicity of identities and expressions, rather than a binary (‘woman’ or ‘man’) (McDougall et al. 2021c). These identities may or may not correspond to biological sex assigned at birth. As a socially constructed concept, gender is contextual and changes over time.

Gender-transformative approach: A gender-transformative approach (or sometimes referred to in the plural, gender-transformative approaches) is an approach in development or R4D that aims to address the foundations or root causes of gender inequality and inequitable gender power dynamics, not only the symptoms or surface barriers. As such, the approach complements but goes deeper than current business-as-usual gender-accommodative approaches. The latter work around gender constraints and often focus on building women’s individual or collective agency or assets. By contrast, a gender-transformative approach seeks to “constructively, and in a context-driven way, transform structural barriers” (McDougall et al. 2021a, 366). The guiding theory is that a gender transformative approach (intentionally) breaks the cycle of gender barriers and constraints being created and perpetuated over time by addressing *underlying drivers or root causes*. Much attention has focused on local-level informal institutional structures (gender norms), which is critical given how these drive imbalanced power dynamics, roles, relations and practices and so forth. In this working paper, we follow the FAO, UNFSS and others in recognizing the need to also address key systemic drivers of inequality in formal (e.g., policy) and semiformal institutional structures (such as statistical systems or financing systems) at all levels.

(Note on terminology: As local, reflexive catalytic gender transformative methods and methodologies have emerged, the term ‘GTAs’ was and is still sometimes used as shorthand to refer to these. For precision and clarity, we do not use that term in this working paper in this sense; rather we refer to and distinguish as we go between gender-transformative approach, methods, methodologies, strategies and tools.)

Gender-transformative methods: In this working paper, gender transformative methods refer to procedures and practices rooted in and used for operationalizing a gender transformative approach. In particular, we apply this term to methods used in gender-transformative programming at the local (including households and groups) and intraorganizational levels. These are embodied by the better-known dialogic methods that spark critical reflection, action and learning required for transforming restrictive norms and unequal power relations, often at the local level. These can be used independently or combined, at different project stages and at multiple levels.

Gender-transformative methodologies: In this working paper, we use the term gender-transformative methodologies to refer to gender-transformative methods that are bundled into stepwise, systematic and ‘branded’ methods packages, oriented toward fostering normative (and relational) change at the household to community levels (e.g., Nurturing Connections or Gender Action Learning System).

Gender-transformative strategies: We use this term for strategies rooted in and used for operationalizing a gender transformative approach. This paper identifies these most often at the meso and macro levels. Strategies are less precisely defined than gender-transformative methods (in this paper), but both are intentionally designed around the specific goal of transforming underlying structural barriers (including formal and semiformal).

Intersectional gender lens: An analytical lens in research that identifies and analyzes multiple forms of discrimination, such as those based on socioeconomic status, ethnicity, class, sexuality and disability, together with gender, to shed light on interrelated and compounding processes of marginalization or privilege.

Gender norms: Gender norms are the socially constituted informal rules regarding women’s and men’s expected roles and behaviors. They interact with other dimensions of identity (such as wealth, ethnicity, or religion) and other expectations and practices. They differ by context, and while enduring, they do change over time (McDougall et al. 2021a). Gender norms “and the associated power relations operate at multiple levels, from household, social group, and community to agroecological landscapes, market systems, and the overall policy and legislative environment. They are tied to deeply rooted, albeit context-related and dynamic, value systems that inform day-to-day practice” (ibid. 372).

Structures: While there are many interpretations and usages of the term, in this working paper, we use structures to straightforwardly refer to the underlying, relatively stable features—and drivers—of society or food systems. They can be thought of as operating at micro, meso and macro levels of society (ibid.). Social structures inform and are informed by social interaction and affect every dimension of the lived experience (Crossman 2019). While structures may be seen as reproducing “stasis,” they interact iteratively with an actor’s agency (ability to learn, reflect and choose actions) to intentionally and unintentionally evolve over time (McDougall and Ojha 2021). In this paper, we consider structures as formal (policies), semiformal (data or other systems and the relations embedded and enacted through them) and informal (norms), from household through to the national and international scales.

Tools: In this working paper, tools refer to operationalizing instruments within methods. They can be used individually or combined.⁵⁰ We include tools for gender-transformative methods at different project stages including, for example, vignettes (as a tool for formative assessment), the Good Man/Good Woman exercise (as a tool for catalytic gender-transformative methods) and the Gender-Equitable Men Scale survey instrument (as a tool in MEL).

ENDNOTES

¹ Gender norms, as a form of social norms, underpin the perpetuation of gender-based violence. As noted by Perrin et al. (2019, 1), “social [and gender] norms are contextually and socially derived collective expectations of appropriate behaviors. Harmful social norms that sustain GBV [gender-based violence] include women’s sexual purity, protecting family honor over women’s safety, and men’s authority to discipline women and children.”

² For example, see the gender transformative approach(es) as a celebrated innovation in CGIAR’s 2021 shortlist of top 50 innovations, <https://www.cgiar.org/innovations/gender-transformative-approaches/>.

³ See *Gender Transformative Approaches for Inclusive and Sustainable Food Systems* (Solution Cluster 4.1.3 of the UN Food Systems Summit), <https://foodsystems.community/solution/gender-transformative-approaches-for-inclusive-and-sustainable-food-systems-2/>.

⁴ See, for example, CARE Burundi and the Africa Centre for Gender, Social Research and Impact Assessment (2021); Lecoutere and Wuyts (2020); and Shannon (2021).

⁵ For examples of attention to gender norms in food systems, see the extensive work of the GENNOVATE initiative (<https://gennovate.org/>), as well as useful synthesis work in areas such as market systems development with communities (Markel et al. 2016).

⁶ This gap and need to include formal and semiformal structures in relation to the gender transformative approach is flagged in a 2021 review (McDougall et al. 2021a) and aligns with the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 framing of gender-transformative methods, <https://foodsystems.community/solution/gender-transformative-approaches-for-inclusive-and-sustainable-food-systems-2/>. It is also evident in other critical work, such as Biswas (2017), which underscores the significance of data and statistical systems as barriers—in that they drive the ‘cycle of invisibility’ created by the gender-blind data–policy nexus. Similarly, Harper et al. (2023) surface sexist data systems in the fisheries sector as a fundamental underlying driver of gender inequalities. Regarding policy, see also Lawless et al.’s (2021) policy analysis of small-scale fisheries, highlighting that policies have ‘tinkered’ with gender inequality, but not ‘transformed’ it.

⁷ Similarly, IKI defines a gender-transformative approach as going “beyond the impacts of gender-based inequalities to transform the gender roles, imbalances in power relations and structures, social norms and rules which lead to inequality, discrimination and exclusion. The goal of gender justice can only be achieved by analyzing the root causes which reinforce and proliferate gender-based inequalities and discrimination, and by changing them accordingly” (IKI 2021, 14). IKI similarly frames a GT approach on a gender approach continuum, while juxtaposing the transformative approach with gender-responsive approaches to projects and programs, which “identify and highlight existing gender-related needs, priorities, power dynamics, problems and potential and integrate the findings into the design, implementation and evaluation of strategies and measures” (ibid.).

⁸ FAO refers to gender-transformative method[ologies] as operating at one or a combination of levels. We note that, at the time of writing, while the notion of sustainability of gender outcomes being connected to multilevel change may be generally agreed, we did not find wide discussion or agreement in the field about whether GT methods and strategies themselves are applied and explicitly operating at multiple levels. In this paper, to allow for examination at different levels as per the framework, and in line with the focus on enabling change at scale, we include methods and strategies that are applied at one or more levels (and then unpack the interconnections in the discussion section).

⁹ See HKI (2015).

¹⁰ This draws on a theory perspective that recognizes that while structures may be seen as reproducing ‘stasis’, they interact iteratively with an actor’s agency (ability to learn, reflect and choose actions) to intentionally and unintentionally evolve over time (McDougall and Ojha 2021).

¹¹ We refer to these as ‘semiformal’ both because they have formal characteristics (e.g., rooted in legislation) as well as informal (normative and interpretive) aspects and because they occupy an integrative, middle space between formal and informal parts of food systems. An example of this, as illustrated by FAO (Biswas 2017; Harper et al. 2023), is that data systems play a causal role in driving gender-blindness in the sector. Gender-blind data systems (design through to collection and interpretation) lead to data gaps and inaccuracies; these contribute to policies under-serving or discriminating against women, as well as reinforcing perceptions and norms about fisheries being a male domain. Here, while shifting norms is critical, it is not sufficient on its own—transforming data systems is an important structure lever for systems change.

¹² See the *Gender Transformative Approaches for Inclusive and Sustainable Food Systems*, Solution Cluster 4.1.3 of the UN Food Systems Summit (2021), <https://foodsystems.community/solution/gender-transformative-approaches-for-inclusive-and-sustainable-food-systems-2/>.

¹³ See UNFPA (2020).

¹⁴ We flag it as a question because, as well as lack of specificity in the literature, there was no consensus among the responses of key informants interviewed within the context of this working paper (see section 3) on this point. While we unpack this explicitly in relation to local GT programming, we note that actors at the meso and macro or intraorganizational levels may also find this subframework useful if and when they are operating in or with programs or projects.

¹⁵ See UNFPA (2020). A socioecological model, broadly speaking, is a multilevel framework used to support conceptualization and understanding of dynamic interrelations among personal and environmental factors; and how behaviors are shaped by factors interacting across individual and societal levels, and among all levels in between (Kilanowski 2017).

¹⁶ See UNFSS (2021), <https://foodsystems.community/solution/gender-transformative-approaches-for-inclusive-and-sustainable-food-systems-2/>.

¹⁷ See Gilles (2015) for examples from private sector, as well as Lokot (2021). Sarapura Escobar and Puskur (2014) refer to the need for change having to appeal to people’s ‘hearts and minds’ in organizations.

¹⁸ See, for example, Colfer et al. (2018) and McDougall et al. (2021c).

¹⁹ The latter (gender identity and sexual orientation) is garnering attention (e.g., Hoffelmeyer [2020] in agriculture; and the World Bank [2016] more broadly challenged homophobia and transphobia in development). To be implemented effectively, these would require contextual knowledge and sensitivities that align clearly with principles of Do No Harm, and specifically taking into account safety because, in some contexts, nonhetero orientations are considered a criminal offence.

²⁰ See a brief summary and history of Farmer Field Schools from the FAO perspective at <https://www.fao.org/3/i7483e/i7483e.pdf>.

²¹ For example, see Riley (2017), Lecoutere et al. (2019) in food systems, or Bernard et al. (2015) for a broader example.

²² For more on Dimitra Clubs, see <https://www.fao.org/policy-support/tools-and-publications/resources-details/en/c/1268211/>.

²³ See McDougall and Ojha (2021) for reflections on this from a theoretical perspective.

²⁴ See, for example, issues raised by Hillenbrand et al. (2015), including the complexities of framing and that measurement of GT change and of other gender outcomes (such as aspects of empowerment) may interconnect.

²⁵ The description of the index, its adaptations, as well as the questionnaires and additional resources are available at <https://weai.ifpri.info/>.

²⁶ Putting these together suggests teams may want to “compare empirical expectations [what I think others do] to actual behavior, and normative expectations [what others expect me to do] to personal attitudes to reveal whether people hold incorrect assumptions about what others do and think (‘pluralistic ignorance’). If most people privately disagree with a harmful norm but believe that everyone else agrees with it, the norm persists. In such situations, a strategy to change the norm can be to correct people’s misperceptions by informing them of others’ actual behavior and attitudes” CARE (2017a, 11).

²⁷ See Mekuria et al. (2015), Mhango et al. (2015) and Hillenbrand et al. (2015) for more discussion of indicators.

²⁸ See the UNFSS Gender Solution Cluster Note at <https://foodsystems.community/gender-transformative-approaches-for-inclusive-and-sustainable-food-systems-2/> or the Summit webinar on gender transformative approaches as a solution, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/13bgTDdtBBk9taXqaMeHriSLAhR2Q24K/view>.

²⁹ Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy for example, focuses on "gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in a manner that is both targeted and crosscutting A targeted approach to gender equality allows us to focus on initiatives that fight poverty and inequality by supporting gender equality and defending the rights of women and girls, particularly their sexual health and reproductive rights This approach also means that all our implementing partners must consult with women and involve them in needs assessments, decision making and planning of initiatives, as well as in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects." (Source: https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/policy-politique.aspx?lang=eng.)

³⁰ As reflected by Ridge et al. (2019), "feminist foreign policy must be transformative of the status quo both for gender norms and roles and policy practice. That is, it must bring about real change. A government simply declaring a policy feminist does not make it so; it must ascribe to these principles in the delivery of that policy such that outcomes (either internally as reflected in policy practice or externally as reflected in gender norms and roles and the balance of power for those on the receiving end) measurably change."

³¹ See the CFFP's lens, <https://centreforfeministforeignpolicy.org/>.

³² As synthesized in CFFP's Overview (2021), there are emergent feminist foreign policies in Sweden, Canada, France, Mexico, Norway, Spain and more.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ As per the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy, <https://centreforfeministforeignpolicy.org/feminist-foreign-policy>.

³⁵ Complementing the deeper data system changes outlined, important specific data systems changes include addressing patriarchal practices (that reflect constraining gender norms and hierarchies), such as eliminating the standard practice of 'head of household'. This practice reinforces gender hierarchies, creating spillover inequalities in policies and implementation. Additionally, recognizing and measuring informal and unpaid work (where women tend to dominate) as legitimate labor may reduce bias and increase policy incentives for care infrastructure.

³⁶ Relates to the maxim "what is measured counts".

³⁷ See UNFSS' Action Track 4, S.10 Gender Transformation National Food System Policies, <https://foodsystems.community/communities/action-track-4/documents/folders/28/>.

³⁸ See Brock and De Haas (2021) for an example of gender discrimination in small-business lending.

³⁹ See the UNFSS Action Track 4, S.11 Closing the gender gap in financial inclusion in food systems, <https://foodsystems.community/communities/action-track-4/documents/folders/28/>. As one example of linking these, CGAP (Koning et al. 2021) flags potential complementary 'norm-informed interventions', including in relation to digitizing government-to-person interventions and access to mobile services.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Nasruddin (2021).

⁴¹ See more on the program in Bevitt (2021), <https://www.cgiar.org/news-events/news/childrens-tv-series-promotes-gender-equality-and-fish-based-nutrition-in-bangladesh/>.

⁴² See, for example, the use of TikTok to bring to light discrimination women face in the construction industry, <https://workwearguru.com/women-in-construction/>.

⁴³ In terms of data generation, for gender audits see, for example, the methodology used by InterAction (see Harvey 2010) or the International Land Coalition (gender audit methodology and multidimensional framework in ILC, 2017a; 2017b). For a lighter touch self-assessment process to structure dialogue on organizational capacity strengths, weaknesses and gaps, see guidance offered by Oxfam Canada. Oxfam Canada (2012) is lighter than a gender audit, but also different in that it describes that it aims to take a program approach to transformative organizational capacity building for gender justice.

⁴⁴ "Reflective learning is an ongoing process in which anyone in a particular situation—in this case, CARE staff members implementing a health project—take time to examine their experiences, to reflect on them, to consider how things might be different, to contemplate these possibilities, and to try out what seems to be the best option. But this is not the end; trying that option becomes another experience in itself—to study, reflect upon and act on again" (CARE 2007, 32).

⁴⁵ See also Shannon (2021).

⁴⁶ See Martinez (2006) and CARE (2016).

⁴⁷ In line with McMurtry (2011, 163), a social value system is “a society’s value-system which is normally presupposed by those governed by it and which ultimately regulates the decision norms and goals of the society’s dominant social institutions, the individual roles within them and the thought structures of those internalizing its regulating assumptions and conclusions. Also referred to as ‘ruling value system’ ”.

⁴⁸ This interconnectedness and complexity was articulated much earlier by Kabeer (1994). In relation to a gender transformative approach, it has been more recently echoed in various spheres including aquatic food systems (Cole et al. 2014) and preventing child marriage (UNFPA 2020).

⁴⁹ This is reflected in CGIAR’s Aquatic Agricultural Systems (AAS) program theory of gender-transformative change (see AAS 2012; Cole et al. 2014). See also Mullinax et al. (2018).

⁵⁰ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/concepts-and-definitions>.



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