

# GENNOVATE II - Ideas for moving forward

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## 1. Introduction

GENNOVATE was an unprecedented study in the CGIAR in its scale and comprehensiveness for examining the interlinkages between gender norms, agency, and innovation; in its attention to women's and men's situated experiences and realities; as well as in its emphasis on capacity development and training on qualitative methodologies for its research partners. The study involved the use of large qualitative comparative data from individual interviews, single gender focus groups, and community profiles. Questions covered a range of topics including (but not limited to) household decision-making, preferred innovations, norms around women's mobility, ability to move out of poverty, and women's ability to access agricultural resources - including sources of knowledge. GENNOVATE had a strong focus on trends, working with respondents to identify significant processes of change in key variables over the decade prior to the study.

GENNOVATE (i) evidenced the relation and influence of local gender norms on innovation; (ii) identified the individual and collective innovation capacities of different kinds of women and men, poor and better off, young and older; (iii) increased understanding of processes of change - including potential tipping points, and highlighted general and context-specific challenges and opportunities for the CGIAR and its partners. Based on this GENNOVATE developed a series of publications, reports, tools, and multimedia resources to inform the design and adaptation of CGIAR research and technologies to local needs and realities.

For a detailed analysis of *GENNOVATE I* strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) see annex 1. This was created by a small team of GENNOVATE researchers and aimed to kickstart wider discussions on how to move forward. Other GENNOVATE researchers may have different views, which is great!

We use the SWOT here to inform the following suggestions for moving forward with GENNOVATE II.

## 2. Guiding Principles for GENNOVATE II

- 1) *GENNOVATE II* will move beyond diagnosing gender norms and relations, by actively promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through the **transformation of** gender relations within the CGIAR and its partners, as well as in rural communities.
- 2) Transdisciplinarity has been endorsed in development as a methodology that brings diverse forms of knowledge together, to design more comprehensive approaches for addressing complex phenomena, such as gender equality. *GENNOVATE II* will promote **transdisciplinarity** as a mode for non-hierarchical collaboration between 'experts' and 'non-experts' and as a principle in the design and implementation of the research.
- 3) *GENNOVATE II* would not be 'GENNOVATE' if the scope and scale are not large and ambitious. It will therefore need to be **large-scale**; covering many countries in different continents and with the involvement of all, or at least most, CG centers.
- 4) For building meaningful collaborations and achieving actual impact, time is needed. *GENNOVATE II* should therefore **run for a minimum of 5 years** but will preferably have an even longer time frame.

- 5) *GENNOVATE II* will build and foster collaborations and **partnerships** within the CGIAR and external partners: universities, NGOs, women's groups, men's groups working for women's empowerment, and other civil society organizations, local governments, NARs, producers' organizations and private sector partners, etc., for supporting co-developed - and where possible partner-led - transformative processes through participation, awareness raising, capacity strengthening and policy influencing at global, national and local levels.
- 6) *GENNOVATE II* will have the specific goal of building capacity on gender, gender research, gender transformative research methodologies, and innovation processes in the CGIAR and with national partners.

### 3. What should GENNOVATE II do?

Through the SWOT analysis we identified three main bodies of work. We suggest these are integral to a gender transformative and transdisciplinary approach to constitute *GENNOVATE II*. We associated the work packages with the titles of the three GENDER platform modules, but we do not suggest these should necessarily be linked.

Of the three interrelated domains for gender transformative change (see below) we propose that *GENNOVATE II* focuses mainly on (2) and to a lesser extent on (1) and (3).

(1) individual capacities, i.e., knowledge, attitudes and skills with a particular emphasis on agency and actions to critically reflect on gender norms and processes creating and reproducing gender and intersectional inequalities; (2) social relations within different sites of the household, village, or research center emphasizing the norms embedded within these – and researching ongoing normative change processes in norms and gender relations ; and (3) social norms and engaging with institutional rules and practices that (re)produce gender inequity,

#### **WP 1 Evidence – Use of existing GENNOVATE I data**

The database and insights from *GENNOVATE I* have not yet been exhausted. More and different uses can be made of the existing data especially if this data becomes available by making it open access. Apart from scientific analysis and publication, there are also opportunities for policy engagement on different levels using *GENNOVATE I* learnings—including *GENNOVATE* tools.

Concretely *GENNOVATE II* should:

- Make all *GENNOVATE I* data open access whilst assuring anonymity. Produce a data user guide to facilitate analysis by (external) researchers.
- Make all synthesis reports available (if necessary anonymizing location details, and tidying up as necessary) and promote them to appropriate publics.
- Identify opportunities for use of *GENNOVATE I* database in conjunction with other (quantitative) data-sets.
- Identify opportunities for feedback to local communities and / or higher levels for GT dialogue and change. These can be in the form of village meetings up to national and regional workshops. At village levels, such meetings could provide feedback on *GENNOVATE I* from their communities/country with the aim of starting a collaborative participatory longitudinal data collection process. The aim of national multi-stakeholder workshops would be to present

core findings relevant to the country/region from *GENNOVATE I* from which a collaborative process can be developed with partners for how to take forward *GENNOVATE II*.

- Identify further opportunities for development of policy materials and other communication materials, including for new audiences (for example, newspapers, policy briefs)
- Identify interest / opportunities and select sites for longitudinal studies.
- (As part of this process, if possible continue collaboration with *GENNOVATE I* national partners and collaborators).

## **WP 2 Methods – Design a *GENNOVATE II* field research and transformative methodology.**

We drew two main conclusions about the methods and the *GENNOVATE I* methodology in particular, each with a set of action points. 1) Since *GENNOVATE II* will adopt a gender transformative and transdisciplinary approach the field research methodology needs to be re-designed; 2) The *GENNOVATE II* field methodology should learn from the methodological strengths and weaknesses of *GENNOVATE I*.

### **1) Adopt a gender transformative and transdisciplinary approach:**

- The *GENNOVATE II* methodology will adopt a gender transformative and transdisciplinary approach, using a reworked version of the *GENNOVATE I* methodology as the basis of the diagnostic phase. This implies the development of new objectives and research questions, theoretical re-grounding, and different implementation and engagement protocols.
- For design of this approach the project team will draw on the experience of gender transformation/ transdisciplinary experts.

### **2) Learn from *GENNOVATE I* and improve**

- *GENNOVATE I* yielded a lot of data. Some of this data was intensively analyzed and reported on, other data not at all. One way of improving the methodology would be to critically look at the different tools and modules / elements within these tools; what do we need to keep (and improve), what has not proven useful and can be taken out?
- Quite a large number of researchers built on the *GENNOVATE I* methodology (or elements) after *GENNOVATE*. We should review these methods and assess their relevance for *GENNOVATE II*.
- *GENNOVATE II* should explore and create methodological innovation, including use of mixed methods as well as action research and other participatory forms of research. This can involve working with national partners who have developed their own methodologies for change as well as potentially introducing new methods relevant for big data platforms such as gaming.
- *GENNOVATE I* did not always yield the kind of data relevant to the key mandates of the funding institute (e.g. with regards to innovation discussed) and was therefore not always interesting for peer research staff within the institute. Relevance could be improved by making *GENNOVATE II* more flexible (asking about the innovations (e.g. specific crops) of interest to the funding institute instead of the innovations most appreciated by the community). Discussions with peer research staff on their data needs should also be conducted at the discretion of each center.
- Another way of increasing relevance would be to develop specific (optional) modules which can be used on conjunction with a 'basic' or 'core' *GENNOVATE II* module. Examples for optional modules are for instance: nutrition; livestock; climate change; water management; extension services; masculinities; intersectionalities; overcoming gender dichotomies in framing and discussing gender dynamics.

- Although engaging both women and men equally in the research, focus was still on women. *GENNOVATE II* should address the topic of masculinities more effectively.

**WP 3 Alliances – Promote Gender transformative change on different levels; Institutional capacity strengthening and GENNOVATE I as model for collaboration.**

We have the impression that within the CGIAR, *GENNOVATE I* was simultaneously successful, and unsuccessful, in promoting transformative change towards gender equality and integrating GTA in center strategies and research portfolios. On the one hand *GENNOVATE I* was unprecedented for the CGIAR. It literally created space for (gender) researchers to conduct qualitative gender research, to engage with peers, other colleagues and partners on this research, raising awareness and building qualitative data collection capacity along the way. On the other hand, *GENNOVATE I* also met with resistance from colleagues and partners and did not completely manage to embed its principles into common R4D practice. The research was ‘extractive’ in many respects as results were generally not shared and discussed with the communities and local stakeholders nor with the field team members and their institutions. Local interactions on *GENNOVATE* sometimes failed to acknowledge the ideas and attitudes of own staff and partners towards ‘promoting gender transformation’.

*GENNOVATE II* should therefore:

- adopt a model of collaboration between gender researchers from within and external to the CGIAR (regular meetings, capacity building on data collection and analysis, writing and publishing together, junior and senior researchers)
- establish and institutionalize partnerships and collaborations between gender and feminist researchers within and external to CGIAR to collaborate on *GENNOVATE II* and beyond
- Expand the awareness of (non-gender) researchers from CGIAR and partners on - and lay the basis for - gender transformative approaches through engagement with *GENNOVATE I* and *II* methods and evidence (Use *GENNOVATE* as a model to build gender research capacities)
- Use *GENNOVATE* principles to study gender norms within CGIAR (including developing tools and methodologies to assess gender norms within the CGIAR and in rural communities); understand resistance and build support for GTA; promote an institutional environment conducive for Gender Transformation.

## Annex 1. SWOT analysis GENNOVATE I

### Strengths

- ✚ **Novel approach to gender research in the CGIAR.** Qualitative comparative work focused on gender norms and agricultural/NRM innovation. Same methodological toolbox for all centres.
- ✚ **Large scale.** 26 countries in three continents, 137 villages; 10 CGIAR centers involved plus universities, NARs and independent consultants.
- ✚ **Diverse sampling criteria.** Agro-ecology, geographic, socio-economic, age.
- ✚ **Cross centre collaboration.** CoP formed by gender and feminist professionals working in agri-food systems with an interest in qualitative research and participatory approaches = knowledge exchange and integration & learning.
- ✚ **Conducive, supportive research environment.** Peer-to-peer exchanges, camaraderie.
- ✚ **Strong new evidence base.** Particularly on interactions between gender norms and agricultural/NRM innovation.
- ✚ **Range of publications.** Articles, blogs, tools etc. for different users.

### Weaknesses

- ✚ **Partners**
  - Weak engagement with policymakers, rural advisory services, women's groups, private sector, and other potential partners and data users.
- ✚ **Methodology**
  - Selection criteria for case-study communities arbitrary - not robust
  - Focus on qualitative data, did not consider mixed methods.
  - Focus on analysis/ diagnosis not transformation.
  - Participatory 'extractivist' methodology. Gennovate did not empower communities through, for instance, providing them with action research tools to continue process of changes, or co-develop tools with them.
  - Fundamentally binary.
- ✚ **Analysis**
  - Led by external researchers without deeply involving, in many cases, national research partners and enumerators involved in the fieldwork.
- ✚ **Dissemination**
  - No (or only very rare) feedback given to communities.
  - No local/ national /regional/ events organized for national partners and other stakeholders.
  - Gennovate data is not open access.
  - Synthesis reports were prepared at great effort and expense yet never used or read.
- ✚ **Data gaps**
  - Did not necessarily answer queries of concern to agronomists, breeders.
  - Top two innovation approach meant that innovations of key concern to specific research centres may not have been identified and analysed.
  - Almost no livestock focus.
  - Weak youth instruments.
  - Lack of attention to masculinities.
  - Intersectionalities – caste, ethnicity, disability exists in communities but muffled by low-income, middle-income use of typologies. Hard to work with concepts of income in countries where other intersectionalities can be more important and indeed exclusionary like caste or ethnicity.
  - Limited data on household typologies: differences between women in male-headed households, women leading their own households not examined specifically. Differences between male-headed and female-headed households also not a research focus.

## ✚ Funding

- Data analysis and writing mostly unfunded.
- Data collection was patchy rather than systemic; mostly selected and funded per center / case-study / researcher.

## Opportunities

Three main bodies of work identified under opportunities – relate somewhat to the modules of GENDER platform: Evidence – Methods – Alliances.

### Ideas for use of existing Gennovate data

- ✚ Make Data and Synthesis Reports open access. (In nearly all cases the respondents are, in any case, very hard to identify – India has 664,369 villages, Gennovate visited 12.) Modify as necessary to protect identities of respondents and improve readability. This data represents a global public good which still has huge informative potential for non-Gennovate researchers and others.
- ✚ Develop a data guide to promote secondary analysis.
- ✚ National, cross-country or case-specific analyses: revisit data with new research questions in mind and with new ways to examine the data.
- ✚ Use as starting point for longitudinal studies. Consider potential of revisiting Gennovate 1 villages in Gennovate II.
- ✚ Develop policy-related documents including information papers for ‘next users’; organize policy /research workshops in key countries to share Gennovate I findings and to allow participants to shape Gennovate II.
- ✚ More broadly, use key learnings from Gennovate 1 to inform design of Gennovate II.

### Ideas for methodological advancement

- ✚ Increase flexibility of methodology for adjustment to local context and differing research needs: Rather than one overarching toolkit, develop modules. There could be one key shared module, then different modules catering to different gender research needs and interests (plant breeders, livestock genetics, associations between women’s empowerment and adoption, intersectionalities, through to work with LGBTI communities). Think of Gennovate as a continuum meeting a variety of needs.
- ✚ Consider mixed-method research methodologies.
- ✚ Conduct inventory of methodologies / tools developed which build on GENNOVATE methods

#### Co-development with partners

- ✚ Consider working with partners who are already rolling out gender-transformative approaches to document this work, and to complement it with new queries relevant to the CGIAR as well as partners.

#### Documenting change processes

- ✚ Consider longitudinal studies (minimum five years, ten years?). Could revisit Gennovate 1 sites in some cases to build on and maximize use of that data.
- ✚ Strengthen historical lens
- ✚ Develop tools to monitor changes in gender relations, tipping points, tipping point context, track change, and if these changes are being maintained

#### Scaling, impact

- ✚ Research best ways to scale agricultural innovations (give us more leverage and influence)
- ✚ Focus on obtaining evidence about impact/assessment of agricultural technology on gender equality and women’s empowerment, and vice-versa

#### Moving away from binaries in context of agricultural development

- ✚ Explore intersectionalities (age, gender, caste, ethnicity, disability, marital status ...)

- ✚ Strengthen dialogue between gender work in development and feminist epistemologies
- ✚ Transformative approaches (framework, process, outcome)
- ✚ Explore masculinities
- ✚ Explore LGBTI

#### Institutional capacity (GENNOVATE as model for collaboration)

- ✚ Replicate the GENNOVATE approach of working across centers, research backgrounds, etc. keep the diversity
- ✚ Use the methodology /module as a tool to examine power issues at the system level (i.e. agri-food system), who counts (smaller or larger farmers; what types of farm system – industrial, smallscale, sustainable, plantation)?
- ✚ Analyze gender norms within CGIAR
- ✚ Use GENNOVATE for capacity building of scientific staff
- ✚ Use to strengthen process of engagement in the field
- ✚ Model of collaboration of gender researchers within and external to CGIAR – mutual learning / mentorship. How to preserve / replicate / integrate this
- ✚ Nurture and advance collaborative learning at multiple levels about changes to gender and other norms associated with agricultural innovation, gender equality, and poverty reduction.
- ✚ Weave into new CGIAR Initiatives
- ✚ Embed within academic ‘trends’ linked to the CGIAR

#### Threats

- ✚ Compartmentalization and risk of instrumentalization
- ✚ Lack of institutional support/funding for GENNOVATE
- ✚ Lack of external funding
- ✚ Poor engagement by colleagues with GENNOVATE methods and evidence