

# Gender transformative approaches in agriculture

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A literature review conducted for the European Commission by the  
**CGIAR Collaborative Platform for Gender Research**

## Background and rationale for gender transformative approaches



- ❖ Dissatisfaction / critique of mainstream gender integration:
  - ❖ Too technical (focus on gaps),
  - ❖ Superficial,
  - ❖ Based on 'fixed' categories of men and women
  - ❖ Reproducing gender inequity through implicit bias
- ❖ GTAs as alternative to "business as usual"

# Understanding gender transformative approaches



## Common threads in the conceptualization of GTA:

- ❖ GTA center around **transformation**:
  - ❖ Focus on underlying causes, power dynamics and structures
  - ❖ Creating an enabling environment
  - ❖ Examine, question and change rigid gender norms
- ❖ GTAs operate at three interrelated **dimensions of change**:
  - ❖ Individual capacities and agency
  - ❖ Social relations and norms
  - ❖ Social structures and institutions
- ❖ **Partnerships**: engaging with different actors across scales

# The goals of gender transformative approaches



Better  
development  
outcomes

Gender  
equality

# Women's empowerment and gender transformative change



## Commonalities:

- ❖ concerned with **individual** and **collective agency**
- ❖ conceptualization of **power**:
  - ❖ power to,
  - ❖ power with
  - ❖ power from within
- ❖ critical **reflection**, engagement with social **structures** and **institutions**



## Women's empowerment and gender transformative change



### Some (potential) differences:

- ❖ (targeting power relations)
- ❖ Emphasis on women's agency vs. relational aspects of gender inequity
- ❖ Who benefits: women or society as a whole?
- ❖ Explicit focus on men and questioning the effects of harmful masculinities
- ❖ Focus on organizational change and learning

# Methodologies for gender transformative change



**Participatory Action Research** for knowledge generation as well as a process for transformation

- ❖ encourage critical **self-reflection and explores bias**
- ❖ acknowledge and value **different ways of knowing and forms of knowledge**
- ❖ emphasis on the role and **positionality** of the facilitator

# Methodologies for gender transformative change



## Capacity strengthening and organizational learning: “talk the talk and walk the walk”

- ❖ **Holistic** focus on participants of GTA: **community members, researchers** and **development actors**
  - ❖ Capacity strengthening at inter-related levels of the individual staff/researcher and the organization
- ❖ **“Learning by doing”** to complement traditional training
  - ❖ Strengthening reflective and critical capacities,
  - ❖ Encounter inequality and adversity, which is needed to understand alternative ways of believing and behaving



## Lessons learned on GTA from Aquatic Agricultural Systems (AAS)



- ❖ Translate big ideas into **principles and concrete strategies** for action (with room for maneuver)
- ❖ **Intersectionality**: reframing gender in complex systems
- ❖ Start at the beginning with **contextual analysis** and **capacity development around GTAs across the research team**
- ❖ Individual and institutional **commitment**
- ❖ **Critical reflection**
- ❖ GTAs are **long-term** and **diverse**

# Thank you!

