



Collaborative  
Platform for  
Gender Research

# Reflections on gender transformative approaches in agriculture

## the promise and cautionary tales

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# IMPLEMENTING GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES IN AGRICULTURE

CGIAR Collaborative Platform for Gender Research

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A Discussion  
Paper for the  
European  
Commission



## Implementing Gender Transformative Approaches in Agriculture

A discussion paper for the European Commission

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## Background



- Commissioned by the **European Commission** as part of their initiative to **embed GTAs** in policy dialogue, programs of the United Nations Rome-Based Agencies (e.g. FAO, IFAD, etc)
- Provides background on the **discourse and practice of GTAs** in agriculture and NRM domains
- Presented at an **Inception Workshop** in Rome in May 6-8 to the RBAs
- Will be made available to public in the summer (expected)

## Structure of Presentation



- Casual dialogue format
- Overall following the structure of the paper
- Q & A to finish

## GTAs: a radical proposition



- “[D]eep, enduring change in which what emerges is fundamentally different from what went (on) before” (Brookfield 2012 cited by Kantor et al., 2013).
- Address the foundations of gender inequity “rather than just closing the various gender gaps between men and women” (Kantor et al., 2015)
- Focus on unequal power relations and transforming them to be more equitable

## So why now? What's the rationale behind GTAs?



- Critiques of gender integration practice
  - framing of gender analysis on “gaps”
  - focus on the different roles of women and men (Okali, 2011, Weeratunge et al., 2011) and the differences between women and men
- Call for an alternative to “business as usual” (Vossenbergh et al., 2018, Sarapura et al., 2014)

Ignores:

- The set of economic, social, political roles; rights; entitlements; responsibilities; and obligations associated with being female & male.
- Power dynamics between and among men & women, boys & girls.

Gender Unaware



Gender Aware

## Stereo-typing

Reinforces or takes advantage of gender inequalities and stereotypes.

## Accommodating

Works around existing gender differences and inequalities.

## Transformative

- Fosters critical examination of gender norms\* and dynamics.
- Strengthens or creates systems\* that support gender equality.
- Strengthens or creates equitable gender norms and dynamics.
- Changes inequitable gender norms and dynamics.

**GOAL**

Gender equality and better development outcomes.



\* Norms encompass attitudes and practices.

\* A system consists of a set of interacting structures, practices, and relations.



Adapted  
IGWG, 2002

## Small holder aquaculture development in Bangladesh



- Inclusive and accommodative aquaculture development programming: backyard ponds
- Focus on involving women in training and empowering women
- Women continued to face barriers: norms restricting access to benefits from resources
- GTA sessions merged with technical sessions as well as GTA-oriented community theatre

See also Farnworth et al. 2016



## Gender as a social relation



- Influence “the positions, attitudes and opportunities of the people who engage in agriculture – e.g. women and men, wealthy and poor, landowners and landless – (that) shape agricultural practices, knowledge and outcomes” (Kantor, 2013).
- Influence and are influenced by gender roles and responsibilities and claims over resources and rights.
- Define women’s and men’s relative social positions and therefore gender inequality in a specific time and place (Kabeer, 1994)

## GTAs and women's empowerment?



- *Similarities*
  - Focus on agency and social structures
  - Putting “political back in gender” and power relations
- *Differences*
  - Depends on the definition
  - Who participates and who benefits

## Goals



- Improve development outcomes
- A “means to a different, broader end: gender equality” (Farnworth et al., 2015)
- GTAs resulting in gender equality and a means to better development outcomes (e.g., AAS Gender Strategy 2012).

## Dimensions of change



Three inter-related dimensions of change at the level of:

- **individual capacities** (knowledge, attitudes and skills) with a particular emphasis on agency and actions “to critically examine gender norms and inequality”;
- **social relations**, within different sites of the household, community etc., with an emphasis on norms embedded within these; and,
- **social structures** and engaging with institutional rules and practices that (re)produce gender inequity

(Sarapura and Puskur, 2014)

## ToCs of GTAs are commonly understood in terms of



1. Changes fostered in three domains:
  - individual capacities
  - the gendered expectations embedded within social relations in different institutional sites (e.g. household, community)
  - institutional rules and practices
2. More and better livelihood choices for poor and marginalized women and men and more equitable norms and social institutions.
3. An expansion in their potential to contribute to and benefit from technologies

## Participatory strategies for implementing GTAs



- Encourage critical self-reflection and self-awareness via social learning
- Generate new knowledge, learning and insight from continual and iterative cycles of action and reflection
- Participation that is empowering and transformational
- Resource intense: skilled facilitation, time and financial

# Participatory strategies for implementing GTAs



## *Participatory action research*

- equitable relationships between the researcher and the researched
- collective participation in all stages of the research
- the processual quality allows for questioning assumptions

## *Participatory action learning*

- group of action-based learning techniques
- structured and prescriptive

## Organisational change



- Critical dimension, particularly from a social relations perspective
- “new desired ways of thinking and acting in relation to gender and gender transformative approaches (must also be embedded in) organizational values, systems and procedures” (Cole et al., 2014)
- Informal and formal at the levels of both the individual and the systemic (Rao et al., 1999)



## Capacity strengthening



- Common element: participants – whether researchers, development actors or community participants – are engaging in new ways of knowing, understanding and learning
- Incorporates transformational learning and emphasis on shifts in mental models and personal beliefs
- Focus on horizontal learning, valuing of different perspectives and ways of knowing/learning, and incorporating inter-relationships between knowledge and power
- Learning by doing approach

## Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL)



- “Embrace complexity” and “purposively capture incremental and non-linear unpredictable processes
- Requires a new way of thinking as to what and how transformative change is assessed in MEL systems
- Use of multi-level and multi-dimensional outcomes and indicators with specific attention to gender norms
- Mixed methods approaches that privilege qualitative and participatory techniques alongside quantitative approaches
- Importance of tracking reversals and negative changes
- Privileges voice and measurement processes that are empowering for participants and project staff alike

## Ladder of power and freedom

**Step 5:** Power & freedom to make most all major life decisions



**Step 4:** Power & freedom to make many major life decisions



**Step 3:** Power & freedom to make some major life decisions



**Step 2:** Only a small amount of power & freedom



**Step 1:** Almost no power or freedom to make decisions

For more information, see Petesch & Bullock (2018)

## Considerations for implementing GTAs in agriculture



- Conceptual clarity and integrity
- The role of external agents in normative change
- Learning about and capacity strengthening for implementing GTAs
- Problematizing the scaling of GTAs
- Organisational introspection and preparedness

## Questions and Answers



- <https://gender.cgiar.org/webinar-gta-2019/>

**Over to you!**

# Thank you!



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