

IMPLEMENTING GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES IN AGRICULTURE

CGIAR Collaborative Platform for Gender Research

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Contents

Executive summary	i
1. Introduction	1
2. Gender Transformative Approaches in agriculture: rationale and key concepts	2
Why Gender Transformative Approaches?	3
GTAs are about deep, enduring change	4
Goals of GTAs	6
Key conceptual distinctions of GTAs	6
3. GTAs and theories of change	8
Theories of change of GTAs themselves	8
GTAs as part of wider ToCs	8
4. Methodologies used in GTAs	11
Participatory strategies for implementing GTAs	11
Implications of GTAs for capacity-strengthening and organizational learning	18
5. Measurement and assessment	20
Tools for assessing gender transformative change	22
6. Considerations for implementing GTAs in agriculture	26
Conceptual integrity	26
The role of external agents in normative change	27
Learning about and capacity-strengthening for implementing GTAs	28
Problematizing the scaling of GTAs	29
Organizational introspection and preparedness	30
7. Conclusions	31

References

Executive summary

Over the past 15 years, Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs) have become prominent in the gender and development literature. For proponents, they are the source of both promise and inspiration, for their potential to have an impact on development outcomes as well as gender equality. We understand GTAs as ways to address the foundations of gender inequity and unequal power relations, with a focus on transforming gender relations to be more equitable. With this definition, GTAs are seen as distinct from, and complementary to, approaches to gender integration.

This interest in GTAs needs to be seen as part of a trajectory of 45 years of gender and development theory and practice and what happens to innovative ideas. This starts with understanding and maintaining the initial impetus for GTAs, which stems from a number of critiques of gender integration practice. In particular, the exclusive focus of gender analysis on “gaps”, especially in terms of roles of women and men and their differential access to resources, results in homogenizing and fixing women and men as categories, without considering social relations of power and other intersecting social dimensions such as age, social status, race, ethnicity, etc.

GTAs respond to a call for an alternative to the “business as usual” approach to gender integration and, it can be argued, how development itself is conceived. This alternative approach is needed in order to address **structural change**, to move beyond instrumentalist interventions and to address the underlying causes of gender inequality. Rather than focusing exclusively on the self-improvement of individual women, GTAs also work towards transforming power dynamics and structures that reinforce gender inequity with the wider purpose of promoting gender equality and improving development outcomes.

This more systemic understanding implicates those *doing* the development – development agencies and professionals – and requires their reflection, change and transformation. This has far-reaching implications for how development is done, as GTAs are intentionally reflexive: they recognize that norms are not necessarily “out there” and beyond the purview of certain development actors. Norms are, in fact, subsumed in and (re)produced by all development actors. As such, the norms and ways of working of development agencies and professionals are necessarily transformed when GTAs are implemented.

Key conceptual distinctions of GTAs include understanding gender as a social relation as opposed to focusing solely on gender roles. In this way, we understand that “women” and “men” are not homogenous categories but heterogeneous based on other intersecting categories of social status such as class, ethnicity, caste, etc. Hence, social relations of gender inform the relative social positionings of diverse women and men .

GTAs are related to approaches to women’s empowerment but are also distinct. One main difference is that most understandings of GTAs insist on working with both women and men to transform the social relations of gender to be more equitable, for example in decision-making, access to resources and how women and men are relatively valued in all spheres of society. What we learn from the experience with women’s empowerment is how, in the process of becoming popularized, analytically robust concepts can be instrumentalized and risk losing their core value. The promotion of women’s empowerment approaches acts as a cautionary tale for the adoption and inevitable adaptation of GTAs over time.

Several tenets lie behind GTAs as supporters of change:

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

The implementation of GTAs has entailed a number of specific methodologies. These are not unique to GTAs but are used for their **specific qualities**. First are **participatory strategies for implementing GTAs**, which are characterized by their potential to encourage critical self-reflection and self-awareness via social learning. These characteristics allow for generating new knowledge, learning and insight derived from continual and iterative cycles of action and reflection. The “doing” is the basis for new knowledge derived from critical reflection of action, which in turn informs further action.

A second methodological implication of GTAs concerns **capacity-strengthening** and **organizational learning**. Understandings of these within GTAs draw on principles of transformative learning, which extends beyond knowledge and skills acquisition and requires shifts in mental models, values and beliefs. The systemic nature of change implied in GTAs requires different framings of both how capacity-strengthening is approached and the role of development agencies, to, in particular, take into account their own transformation through learning. Ultimately, transformation requires that individuals and organizations embrace critical self-awareness about their own gender (and other) biases (unconscious or otherwise), their positionality and personal as well as professional agendas *vis-à-vis* the implementation of GTAs.

The potential of GTAs lies in the radical proposition of attempting to address the foundations of gender inequity. Through the process of adoption, certain adaptations to the ideas underlying GTAs are evitable. Still, organizations and programs need to be conscious of the ultimate goal – gender equality – and the potential for losing sight of this. Adapting key concepts to facilitate implementation must not jeopardize conceptual clarity and sharpness.

For this reason, this Discussion Paper concludes with a number of implications for development agencies to consider when thinking about adopting GTAs. These include the need for conceptual clarity and integrity; the role of external agents in normative change; approaches to learning about, and capacity-strengthening for, implementing GTAs; problematizing the scaling of GTAs; and the need for organizational introspection and preparedness.

1. Introduction

The European Commission is designing a €5 million project, **“Taking gender transformative approaches to scale for impact on SDG2 – food security, nutrition and agriculture”**. This project aims to embed Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs) in policy dialogue, programs and working modalities of the United Nations Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs). It will do this by strengthening understanding of GTAs of relevant staff and partners; by increasing collaboration, complementarities and synergies between the RBA interventions around GTAs; and by promoting an “institutional mindset” shift within each RBA to engage with these approaches.

The purpose of this Discussion Paper is to provide an understanding of GTAs and highlight implications for their implementation by the RBAs. Serving as a basis for the project, the paper was presented at an Inception Workshop (6–8 May 2019), which acted as the interface between CGIAR’s work on GTAs and the commencement of the RBAs’ work.¹

The **CGIAR Collaborative Platform for Gender Research**² was asked to draw on the significant wealth of experience and material around GTAs in the rural sector – specifically in the aqua/agriculture and natural resource management domains – to lead the development of the Discussion Paper. It is based on a literature review as well as interviews with GTA researchers and practitioners, supplemented by the experience of the authors. A separate document with Annexes elaborates our approach to the Discussion Paper (Annex A).

Section 2 explains the rationale for GTAs in agriculture and introduces key concepts. Section 3 covers the theories of change of GTAs. Section 4 describes key methodologies and Section 5 is concerned with measurement and assessment. The last section (6) presents a discussion of the implications for implementing GTAs in agriculture.

¹ After the Inception Workshop, this Discussion Paper was revised to incorporate meeting proceedings, particularly suggestions and recommendations for the RBAs’ next steps in implementing GTAs.

² The CGIAR Collaborative Platform for Gender Research is housed in the CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions and Markets (PIM) and coordinated by KIT Royal Tropical Institute. All authors of this paper are KIT Advisors on Gender and Agriculture. Rhiannon Pyburn (Coordinator) and Andrea Vos (Assistant to the Coordinator) are fully engaged with the activities of the CGIAR Collaborative Platform for Gender Research.

2. Gender Transformative Approaches in agriculture: rationale and key concepts

Over the past 15 years, GTAs³ have become prominent in the gender and development literature, particularly in relation to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and they are of growing interest for agricultural development. For proponents, they are the source of both promise and inspiration in relation to the potential to have an impact on development outcomes as well as gender equality [1]. As an introductory definition, we understand GTAs as ways to address the foundations of gender inequity and unequal power relations, with a focus on **transforming** gender relations to be more equitable. With this definition, GTAs are seen as distinct from, and complementary to, approaches to gender integration.

The idea of development being transformative did not start with GTAs [2]: calls for a systemic and structural approach to addressing gender inequity are not new.⁴ For instance, Young [4], one of the earliest proponents of development being transformative, referred to the *transformatory potential* of addressing **practical gender needs** in ways that can “challenge unequal power relations and contribute to women’s empowerment” [5].

Given the historic roots of GTAs, this paper critically situates them within the wider context of gender and development, for a number of reasons.

- 1) Changes in approaches concerning women and gender in development have been described as shifts from *women IN development* (WID) to *women AND development* (WAD) to *gender and development* (GAD)⁵ [6]. More recently, these shifts have been described as moving from gender integration to women’s empowerment to GTAs [7]. However, these shifts in concepts, terminology and practice are not necessarily complete, consistent or uniform. For example, organizations often adopt the term “gender” without changing their women/WID focus [8]. Also, a shift towards GTAs does not necessarily mean abandoning gender integration approaches within the same organization or program, as they can be complementary (see below for examples).
- 2) These shifts represent a development of ideas. Too often, contemporary development practice is understood without appreciation for the history of ideas [9]: ideas may appear new but have historic precedents that are not sufficiently taken into account to frame the “innovation”. This strips ideas of their transformative potential as they are implemented without an appreciation for their methodological substance, which often renders their implementation solely a technical exercise [10].

For example, gender mainstreaming started from, and is based on, foundational ideas of gender justice and feminist analysis. However, its popularization, while welcome, failed to deliver on the promises of promoting gender equality [11]. This is partly because the approach was scaled out and up as a technical exercise, and, with that, the politics of social change at its basis was stripped away [12].

³ Given the different aims and understandings of approaches to gender transformative change, the term ‘gender transformative approaches’ – GTAs – is pluralized in this paper.

⁴ For example, see Beneria and Sen (1981).

⁵ Referring to the approaches of women in development; women and development; and gender and development, respectively.

We strongly believe that, as development agencies become increasingly interested in GTAs, they need to see them as part of a trajectory of 45 years of gender and development theory and practice, and to bear in mind what so often happens to innovative ideas. Practically, this means starting with understanding and maintaining the initial impetus for GTAs, which is discussed next.

Why Gender Transformative Approaches?

Interest in and thinking on GTAs stems from a number of critiques of gender integration practice. *First* is the common **framing of gender analysis on “gaps”**, which is considered problematic [13, 14]. Gap analysis focuses on visible manifestations of gender inequality while ignoring, and subsequently not addressing, underlying factors [15, 16]. It also tends to overly simplify what are complex problems.

A *second* impetus for GTAs is a related common exclusive focus on the **different roles of women and men** [13, 15] and the **differences between women and men**, particularly women and men’s differential access to resources [17]. This understanding has the effect of homogenizing women and men as categories without considering other intersecting social dimensions such as age, social status, race, ethnicity, etc. As part of this process, they become understood as binary opposites, with the dominant category (men) becoming the norm against which its opposite (women) is explicitly and implicitly assessed [18].

With this lack of differentiation, categories become fixed and unchangeable – which also contributes to understandings of men and women as unchangeable categories rather than diverse and connected by dynamic relations. Examples include stereotypical understandings of women as being perpetually disadvantaged [19]. Commensurately, men are largely seen as lazy, uncaring and unproductive [20, 21]. If social relations of gender are considered, women and men are often portrayed primarily as being in conflict with each other, with conflicting interests, rather than as sharing some interests and contesting others.

The *third* reason for interest in GTAs is an acknowledgement of the **limits of an exclusive focus on women’s empowerment**. This is particularly troublesome when women are understood as an undifferentiated category, as described above, and the focus is only on women’s agency, with no account taken of the gender relations that women and men experience. A focus on women’s empowerment is also problematic when understood instrumentally – that is, primarily as a means to other ends, such as economic development [22].

Subsequently, gender integration efforts in development initiatives generally, and in agricultural development in particular, are not as effective as they could be [14, 23-28]. Improvements remain superficial and risk being back-tracked or, worse, causing unintended negative impacts [29]. More enduring positive impacts on poverty and hunger remain unlikely [14].

GTAs respond to a call for an alternative to “business as usual” [28, 30]. This applies to gender integration but also, it can be argued, to how development itself is conceived. An alternative approach is needed to address **structural change**, going beyond instrumentalist interventions.

While the interest in adopting GTAs has emerged from insights related to the limits of gender integration, two points need to be kept in mind. First of all, as previously mentioned, gender integration approaches still have their merits when they take into account the different needs and interests of particular women and men (which is an improvement to gender “blind” approaches that do not address gender concerns at all). A second, and related, point is that adopting GTAs does not mean dispensing with gender integration approaches. Approaches often can overlap and co-exist. For

example, a particular program may have elements of gender integration alongside GTAs. Box 1 gives an example.

Box 1: Example of co-existing and complementary gender integration and gender transformative approaches – the case of the CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE)

The WLE program adopted a focus on GTAs in its 2014 Gender Strategy and commits in its full proposal for 2017–2022 to continuing to work towards gender transformative change. WLE recognizes the need for social change in addition to technical change in order to meet its vision of “creating vibrant ecosystems, food and water secure communities, and improvements in livelihoods”. It defines gender transformative as when “both men and women are helped while gender roles are transformed and more gender-equitable relationships are promoted” [31].

To this end, the research program employs GTAs, starting with an understanding of the local social context so as to develop the right interventions that will address gender equality among other development outcomes [32]. One goal of gender transformative research within WLE work is to identify differing needs and interests, to uncover harmful norms, roles and relations and to inform better strategies and interventions for transformative outcomes. These transformative outcomes are defined as (1) enhanced ability, and access to information, to engage in decision-making and policy development; (2) improved access to, and control of, water, land and ecosystems; and (3) empowerment of women and their enhanced ability to restore, rebalance and reinvest in water, land and ecosystems [31].

GTAs are about deep, enduring change

What is critical to note is that adopting a GTA is an intentional act: changes in focus and ways of working are a result of a deliberate process. Part of this involves being clear as to what GTAs entail, starting with understanding of transformative change as “deep, enduring change in which what emerges is fundamentally different from what went [on] before” (Brookfield 2012 cited by Kantor and Apgar [11]). For GTAs, change is clearly about addressing “the underlying causes of gender inequality rather than just closing the various gender gaps between men and women” [27]. The implication is that, rather than focusing exclusively on the self-improvement of individual women, GTAs also work towards “transforming power dynamics and structures that act to reinforce gendered inequalities” [33].

This common framing of GTAs understands three interrelated dimensions of change, at the level of:

- 1) **individual capacities** (knowledge, attitudes and skills), with a particular emphasis on agency and actions “to critically examine gender norms and inequality”;
- 2) **social relations**, within different sites of the household, community etc., with an emphasis on norms embedded within these; and
- 3) **social structures** and engaging with institutional rules and practices that (re)produce gender inequity [28].

How these three dimensions are engaged varies. Some authors identify them as sites of change [34]; others [7, 30] see them as programming areas (see Box 2 for an example).

Box 2: Programming for GTAs – a Gender-Transformative Extension and Advisory Facilitation System in Zambia (GT-EAFS)

Cathy Farnworth and Kathleen Colverson’s GT-EAFS aims to tackle the “conceptual lock-in” present in rural advisory services. This lock-in stereotypes men as lead farmers with commercial interests and ignores women farmers or sees them as interested only in feeding their households. They contend that gender unaware extension reproduces gender inequities and undermines existing collaborative processes [35]. The authors propose to view extension and advisory services not as *goals* in and of themselves but as a *means* to bring about gender equality.

Accordingly, GT-EAFS thinks of extension and rural advisory services as a holistic *system* within which men and women farmers could effectively work, instead of a service that *reaches* men and women farmers. It emphasizes “the process of creating knowledge with end users” [35]. In-depth discussion and collaboration among stakeholders are needed to create an enabling environment, identify underlying norms and power structures at the root of gender inequalities as well as entry points for gender transformative change.

GT-EAFS works on three interlinked domains, which parallel the dimensions of change of GTAs [26]. First, strengthening women’s *agency*, or the ability to make one’s own choices and act on them, their aspirations and their capabilities. Second, improving women’s *relations* with other actors, in other words, “their ability to create, participate in, and benefit from networks; the power relationships through which women negotiate their rights and needs with other development actors” [35]. Third, focusing on *visible local structures* (e.g. producer groups, development agencies) and *invisible local structures* (e.g. values, assumptions and ideologies) that surround and condition women’s choices. To link these components from the individual to communities and wider surroundings, locally relevant empowerment pathways are developed in collaboration with direct and indirect stakeholders.

For example, Farnworth and Colverson suggest practices that could be incorporated into a GT-EAFS: (1) changing cooperative by-laws to transform visible structures; (2) working with traditional leadership; (3) working with the whole household through household methodologies to develop agency and transform visible and invisible structures; and (4) involving men to transform invisible structures.

Still, the three elements of **agency**, **structure** and **relations** are closely interrelated. For example, Hillenbrand et al. see these three “domains” of change as indicating where “transformation is needed to advance gender equality” [33] and note their interrelatedness. A person’s outlook (e.g. aspirations and attitudes) is greatly influenced by social norms and practices, as well as the quality of their relationships and support networks. The authors contend that, “evidence has also shown that programming focused on one domain risks reversibility and harm if it fails to engage the other domains for gender-transformative change” [ibid.].

Goals of GTAs

What, then, is the goal of GTAs? Unsurprisingly, there are different interpretations. One interpretation understands GTAs as aiming to **improve development outcomes**. Okali [13] and Farnworth et al. [1], however, caution against instrumentalizing social change aspirations and seeing GTA processes dominantly as a means to a development end.

For others, development services are “a means to a different, broader end: gender equality” [35]. Lastly, many interpretations of GTAs see gender equality as both a worthy end in itself and a means to better development outcomes.

Regardless of the interpretation of the goal, and given the definition of GTAs described previously, they require a “more radical and intentional stance” [16]. GTAs “aim to disrupt the gendered status quo, calling into question the power, privilege and status of the dominant group, primarily white men” [36]. This entails a **structural approach** that, by definition, involves all actors and participants in development processes.

This more systemic understanding implicates those *doing* the development – development agencies and professionals – and requires their reflection, change and transformation [for example, see 37]. This has far-reaching implications for how development is done, as GTAs are intentionally reflexive: they recognize that norms are not necessarily “out there” and beyond the purview of certain development actors. They are, in fact, subsumed in and (re)produced by all development actors.

As suggested above, GTAs differ from gender integration approaches in that they require rethinking development and its implementation, as Box 1 illustrates. In particular, dominant development discourse is considered to be incompatible with women’s empowerment, as it reproduces the very power relations that serve to undermine gender equality [36]. Neoliberal economic approaches⁶ to development tend to instrumentalize women’s empowerment by promoting it in terms of more effective and efficient use of women as an “untapped” resource, which is a limited interpretation [38, 39]. The related emphasis on individual women and economic development “edits out the political processes of grassroots mobilization of women and sidelines the feminist values of building women’s awareness and capacities to challenge patriarchal structures and relations on their own terms” [33].

Key conceptual distinctions of GTAs

GTAs include distinct understandings about gender as a social relation as well as overlaps with women’s empowerment, which are highlighted below.

Understanding of gender as a social relation

GTAs draw on an understanding of **gender as a social relation**, as opposed to gender being about roles of women and men and, relatedly, gaps between them, as previously discussed. The rationale for adopting this understanding is that it is gender relations that “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” [26]. They influence and are influenced by gender roles and responsibilities and claims over resources and rights. They define women’s and men’s relative social positions and therefore gender inequality in a specific time and place [40]. Social relations of gender are considered critical to the study of women and are

⁶ For Amaryta Sen 2014 (cited by Boyd 2016, 148) “neoliberalism has shaped global and national economic policies in favor of ‘fiscal conservatism, open markets for capital and commodities, privatization’, and granted a bigger role to financial and corporate sectors.”

“socially constituted and not derived from biology” [41]. They are neither *always harmonious* nor *always conflictual* [13].

GTAs and women’s empowerment

These concepts can be found in the same discussions and are sometimes used interchangeably. This is understandable, as **the two concepts can overlap** depending on how they are respectively understood. For example, they both sometimes endorse processes of critical reflection of and engagement with **social structures** that maintain dominant gender power relations. They can both be concerned with **individual and collective agency**, where some approaches to women’s empowerment emphasize voice as well as enhanced capacity for intentional action, influencing and making decisions. By extension, women’s empowerment is often concerned with expanding choice [42]. This certainly would not be contradictory of GTAs. Also, while GTAs are about process, women’s empowerment is often thought of both as a process (the “how”) and/or as a goal (the “what”) [43].

A last common feature is that both can concern power – though not necessarily so. In particular, **GTAs are explicitly concerned with putting “the political back into gender”** [44] and “targeting power relations” [30]. Such notions are common but not always present in all concepts of women’s empowerment.

Where GTAs and women’s empowerment approaches can diverge is in their emphasis on enhancing women’s agency. While critical to both, failing to pay attention to the structural and relational aspects of gender inequity and women’s subordination, alongside women’s agency, is akin to focusing solely on increasing women’s access to resources and not who controls them or the benefits derived from their access. In this sense, such understanding is the antithesis of GTAs. That is to say, **a core tenet of GTAs is to address structural and relational aspects of gender inequity.**

Another possible area of divergence between GTAs and women’s empowerment relates to their emphasis on who participates in and who benefits from these processes. Women’s empowerment clearly focuses on *women*, whereas GTAs embrace different understandings of the relative roles of women and men. Working and critically engaging with both women and men is seen as essential to gender transformative change, given its ambitions to address the foundations of gender inequity.

In working with men, men’s and women’s characteristics should not be understood as simplistic dualisms and as a basis for comparisons, for example in terms of roles or access and control [13]. Accordingly, we should not view men and women as homogenous groups [24, 26, 34] but understand them within “their wider social contexts of gender, age, class and other identities that influence their relations with others” [13]. Still, within an understanding of working with women and men in GTAs, some approaches privilege focusing on women and the promotion of their relative social position [45].

What we can learn from the experience with women’s empowerment is how, in the process of widespread uptake, it was instrumentalized and lost its core value, becoming what Cornwall refers to as “empowerment light” [39]. This experience acts as a cautionary tale in the adoption and inevitable adaptation of GTAs.

3. GTAs and theories of change⁷

This section is about how GTA proponents envision the processes of change in which they engage. In the first instance, we look at theories of change (ToCs) within GTAs. In the second, we look at how GTAs are positioned in relation to other gender aware approaches.

Theories of change of GTAs themselves

- 1) ToCs of GTAs are commonly understood in terms of changes fostered in three domains, as referred to previously: **individual capacities**, the **gendered expectations** embedded within social **relations** in different institutional sites (e.g. household, community) and **institutional rules and practices**.
- 2) These changes lead to **more and better livelihood choices** for poor and marginalized women and men and more equitable norms and social institutions.
- 3) The changes lead to an **expansion in their potential** to contribute to and benefit from **technologies** [for example, see 27].

Preconditions include development actors (donors, agricultural research institutes and state and non-state development agencies) giving **equal** weight to creating and sustaining equitable social environments and to developing and disseminating new technologies. This balance provides the conditions for more people, particularly those who are marginalized, to have more opportunities “to participate in and benefit from agricultural development” (Abala, Green et al. 2004 cited by Kantor [15]).

GTAs as part of wider ToCs

Beyond how ToCs of GTAs themselves are understood, there are two main perspectives as to how GTAs are positioned within wider ToCs. The first sees implementing GTAs alongside other gender integration approaches. The second sees GTAs as the main approach to gender integration, which complements other approaches that are non-gender specific.

Examples of the first perspective include a number of CGIAR research programs that assume a **hybrid of gender integration approaches and GTAs**, where the two are **mutually supportive**. For example, the gender strategy of the Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems (FISH) includes two main principles, explained below, underscored by a third of intersectionality:

As a first guiding principle, FISH aspires for all its research involving people to be gender aware... [for example] designing opportunities, timing and location to accommodate women’s existing domestic and care roles and responsibilities in given contexts... [These] are necessary to reach and benefit women and can offer important entry points for empowerment.

As a second guiding principle, FISH aims to ensure that gender-transformative approaches form an integral part of its activities... [This] research involves the development, testing and application of strategies that go beyond understanding or accommodating gender constraints, to also creating opportunities for locally driven and context-appropriate shifts in underlying gender barriers. In particular, gender-transformative approaches aim to constructively shift

⁷ ToCs represent a popular planning approach to understand and illustrate how and why a desired change is expected to happen (see <https://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/> for more information). This section has been developed in part from descriptions of change described in agricultural research for development programs. These lessons are still relevant for agricultural development programs.

constraining gender norms, attitudes and behaviors towards those that support gender equality [46].

Similarly, the CGIAR Research Program on Roots, Tubers and Bananas (RTB) aims for both gender responsive outcomes (both men and women benefiting from RTB technologies, with neither harmed) and gender transformative ones, where, in addition, “gender roles are transformed and more gender-equitable relationships between men and women are promoted” [47]. The latter is achieved “by creating opportunities for poor women to benefit from technological interventions and by ensuring that interventions are designed to take into account, or compensate for, the production constraints faced by women... RTB will contribute to the empowerment of women and in the long run to transformation of gender relations” [47].

The phase 1 CGIAR Research Program on Agricultural Aquatic Systems (AAS) is an example of the second perspective and how GTAs are understood as part of an overall ToC (see Box 3). What is noteworthy is the consistency in methodological approaches across the program’s entire ToC, which made these mutually reinforcing while also maintaining the specificities of each element.

Box 3: Agricultural Aquatic Systems (AAS) – Research in Development (RinD)

AAS⁸ envisioned GTA as a holistic framework to practice gender research and as an integral part of the program’s overall RinD strategy, as opposed to GTAs as a stand-alone research method [48]. GTAs were conceptualized as one of the six elements that constitute the AAS RinD approach, including a commitment to “people and place”, “participatory action research” and “learning and networking” achieved through “effective partnerships” and “strengthened capacities” [37].

AAS coined the “RinD” term to contrast it with “business as usual” agricultural research [37]. RinD puts emphasis on the scope of inquiry, deep engagement with communities and stakeholders through dialogue and collaboration and the space for critical reflection. These key characteristics of RinD correspond to AAS’ understanding and use of GTA and the view that social change cannot be controlled, but only seeded [37].

Within AAS’ 2012 strategy, gender transformative change is understood as both an **outcome** and a **process** in itself. It is rooted in participatory and collaborative methods that question the *status quo* and aim to transform the social environment of both women and men. In other words, the gender research is carried out for, within and as part of a more complex social reality.

AAS’ strategy is built on three interlinked areas: (1) *a research process* that understands people and social diversity in their context, enables critical learning, reflection and questioning and is multi-scale, dynamic and iterative; (2) *practice* across scales that engages both men and women, addresses unequal power dynamics across social groups, challenges oppressive norms, practices and structures and integrates with agricultural systems interventions; and (3) *outcomes* that involve more and better life choices for poor women and men, inclusive and sustained socio-ecological transformation and gender equitable systems and structures [26].

⁸ AAS operated between 2011 and 2015 as part of the first phase of CGIAR research programs. It aimed to improve the well-being of people dependent on aquatic agricultural systems. Implemented by WorldFish, Bioversity and the International Water Management Institute, AAS worked in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Philippines, Zambia and the Solomon Islands and had a budget of US\$ 68.5M.

This section has outlined how GTAs envision deep and enduring change taking place across three domains – individual, social relations, social structures – which lead to better livelihood choices, which, in turn, lead to an expansion of potential. The question is whether this GTA ToC is pursued alongside approaches to integrate gender in development or is the main approach to promote gender equality, pursued within a wider ToC. Such strategic decisions are likely contingent on the flexibility and potential for change of organizations taking on GTAs.

Regardless, key to GTAs' ambitious agenda is the adoption of particular methodologies, described next.

4. Methodologies used in GTAs

The implementation of GTAs includes a number of specific methodologies. These are not unique to GTAs, but rather are used for their **specific qualities**. These methodologies are featured in the next two sub-sections to highlight that GTAs require doing *new* things as well as doing things *differently*. The first sub-section begins by framing participatory strategies, then delves into two examples for implementation: Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Participatory Action Learning (PAL). We include an elaborated Table A with examples of methodologies used for PAL. The second sub-section looks at capacity-strengthening and organizational learning.

Participatory strategies for implementing GTAs

GTAs use a variety of participatory strategies for many of the same reasons that lay behind the popularity of participatory approaches to development in the 1970s; they encourage **critical self-reflection** [49] and **self-awareness via social learning**. Relatedly, they also **generate new knowledge**, learning and insight derived from continual and iterative cycles of action and reflection. The “doing” is the basis of new knowledge derived from critical reflection of action, which in turn informs further action. Such processes are central to articulating tacit or implicit knowledge [50], such as unconscious bias or deeply entrenched norms. This uncovering of otherwise “hidden” knowledge emerges from the interactive and inclusive qualities that make such strategies participatory.

The development of new knowledge also comes from a valuing of both different kinds of knowledge and different ways of knowing that are otherwise undervalued and made invisible by dominant forms of knowledge and knowing [51]. In agricultural research, this often manifests itself as assuming men are farmers or managers and decision-makers and therefore authoritative sources of knowledge. Universal claims based on this assumption then follow [52]. Another example is the common comparison of male-headed households with female-headed households as if they are the same units of analysis and where the former is the norm against which the latter is compared. Such analysis “confounds gender and household structure. Because women frequently live in male headed households, but female headed households are often defined as not including an adult man, the two are not comparable” [53].

A key characteristic of participatory approaches goes beyond simply getting people involved to consider the **quality** of that involvement. Hence, while GTAs are concerned with participation, it is not just any kind of participation that is sought. Low quality participation, such as “nominal” or tokenistic participation, can be instrumental [54]:⁹ this is not interesting for GTAs [55]. Participatory approaches are concerned with participation that is **empowering** and **transformational**, such as through self-generated insight and knowledge. In other words, *participation* does not automatically make for a *participatory* process.

In this sense, participatory approaches are an appropriate methodology not only for **knowledge generation** but also for **social transformation**. This owes in part to their alignment with concepts of agency and the capacity to imagine the *previously unimaginable* [42]. GTAs are about “extending the horizons of possibility... [so people are] able to aspire high and realize their aspirations” [15]. Participatory processes are one means of achieving more inclusive knowledge production, through acknowledging and valuing different knowledges and ways of knowing.

⁹ Different levels of participation can entail participants (1) being informed, (2) being consulted, (3) influencing and/or (4) weighing in views and taking decisions together (Newton et al., 2019).

Participatory approaches have also been **strongly linked to gender and development**, and in particular women’s empowerment and its measurement [55]. This is a result of the critique that conventional development policy and practices (e.g. what GTA proponents refer to as “business as usual”) assume certain ways of knowing that invisibilize, undervalue and fail to take into account women’s experiences, knowledge and “expertise”[56].

Still, participatory approaches are **not inherently gender aware** [57, 58]: while they aim to be inclusive, they can also reproduce domination, based on gender, class, ethnicity and other dimensions of social differentiation. Hence, participatory approaches not only are concerned with engagement and involvement but also require a certain reflexivity among those managing, organizing, facilitating and benefiting (whether primarily or secondarily) from others’ participation. This means a critical self-awareness about one’s own gender and other biases (unconscious or otherwise), one’s positionality and personal as well as professional agendas *vis-à-vis* the implementation of participatory processes and power dynamics inherent in these. In particular, the role, outlook and positionality of the facilitator (as well as other development professionals involved in GTAs) is pivotal (Chambers 2012 cited by Farnworth, Fones-Sundell [1]), discussed further below.

The use of participatory processes also has its down-sides. They tend to be intense in terms of financial, time and human resources. In particular, skilled and experienced facilitators with contextual knowledge are needed to successfully support participatory processes. Given this, as well as the contextual nature of these processes, there are limits to achieving scale, at least within a project or program. Also, the relative simplicity of the concept of participation belies its complexity and implementation challenges: in order to benefit from the purported benefits, both complexity and issues of power need to be acknowledged and engaged with. They cannot be smoothed over.

Lastly, measurement of results of participatory processes, particularly those concerning empowerment, agency, attitudinal change, etc., is difficult, particularly when using only quantitative indicators to measure change. Mixed methods offer more nuanced measurement but do not always allow robust comparison (see section on measurement for more in-depth discussion).

Within GTAs, two main participatory methodologies are employed: PAR and PAL, which are described next. While these cover a wide variety of diverse methods, common features are the characteristics outlined above. And, while the emphasis is on research and learning, participatory strategies are not used just in initiatives concerned with knowledge development or research. As the examples below show, they are also used in implementing agricultural development, such as farmer field schools.

Participatory Action Research

PAR refers to a group of qualitative research methodologies developed from a critique of more conventional research approaches that reproduce structures of domination through relationships of power and knowledge.¹⁰ PAR departs from conventional research with its focus on action, its emphasis on equitable relationships between the researcher and the researched (even rejecting these hierarchical concepts) and their collective participation in all stages of the research, particularly but not exclusively in problem identification, data analysis and follow-up from research findings. In this manner, PAR contends that participatory approaches to knowledge generation can address power and deep-rooted inequities [59].

¹⁰ The actual origins are contested, although much of the initial thinking is credited to Kurt Lewin and his approach to applied research in organizations.

Given these qualities, PAR is common to GTAs. For example, as mentioned previously, AAS adopted PAR as one of the key elements of its overall RinD approach and the “main vehicle for fostering transformative and developmental change for the poor and marginalized in aquatic agricultural systems” more generally (see Box 3). Moreover, PAR was a vehicle for transformative multiple-level learning to “critically address underlying assumptions and mental models” [11]. With its potential to focus on contextualized, deep critical reflection, awareness and analysis, the use of PAR can support enduring change at the level of individuals and social structures [26]. In terms of gender norms, the processual quality of PAR allows for a “questioning of the assumptions and practices underlying gender inequality, as part of a process of challenging gender-based power imbalances and developing people’s aspirations for self-determination beyond existing gender roles” [16].

One example is the adoption of PAR by WorldFish Bangladesh to explore the intertwining of technical training with activities that questioned social barriers, agency and sense of self among women and their spouses – the intended beneficiaries of technology adoption. PAR resulted in redesigns of how technology was delivered to women [27].

Participatory Action Learning

PAL refers to a group of action-based learning techniques that share many of the qualities of participatory approaches outlined previously, including PAR. At the very core, they have in common the process of taking action to inform learning where that learning serves as a basis for subsequent action.

But there are differences between PAR and PAL. One concerns the emphasis of the purpose. *PAR* is concerned primarily with generating individual and collective understanding and knowledge with those who are supposed to benefit from it. It is generally concerned with **generating knowledge** for a more generalized audience. *PAL* emphasizes continuous improvement in systems and self-development through individual and collective action, where the explicit goal is new knowledge and understanding **to improve action**.

A second difference is the relative structured-ness and codification of PAR and PAL. As a research methodology, PAR tends to be heavily grounded in the theoretical basis that animates the qualities of participatory approaches highlighted above. PAR tends to be less prescribed than PAL. PAL is understood here as a body of approaches that tend to be more specified, and named, as the examples below illustrate. Being more practice-oriented, these tend to be more prescriptive and codified as manuals, tools, training, etc. This, on the one hand, makes them appealing in their immediate applicability, implementability and adaptability. On the other, it leaves them open to possible loss of the qualities and ethos (described above) that make them participatory as well as to co-option as an implementation tool [60-62].¹¹

Within the overall grouping of PAL methods are various related methods that bring discussions and critical reflection on gender relations into focus [63], such as Nurturing Connections, Gender Action Learning System (GALS), Social Analysis and Action (SAA) and Journeys of Transformation. All of these have been used in the context of agricultural development and food security (see Table A for summary of these approaches). These approaches have in common a number of features:

¹¹ Such risks are not limited to PAL and are valid for PAR. See Chambers (2008) for reflection of the rapid popularization of Participatory Rural Appraisal, with which Chamber is most associated, and its application often without adherence to its principles and practices, along with many misunderstandings. See also, in contrast, Cooke and Kothari (2001) for a critique of purported instrumental participation.

- household and community-level dialogue and actions to address “harmful” gender norms by including both women and men;
- a focus on influencing behavior and attitudinal change in support of gender equality and, where relevant, women’s empowerment – for example improved communication, more equitable decision-making and sharing of reproductive tasks;
- adoption of participatory approaches for problem identification and solving and self-reflection;
- use in combination with and support of agriculture technology adoption initiatives.

See Annex B for a fuller description of these and other PAL methods.

Table A: Summary PAL methods used with GTAs [adapted from 64]¹²

Methodology	Developer	Scope	Objective	Strategy and duration	Countries implemented	Key points for consideration
Gender Action Learning System (GALS) [65]	Oxfam Novib and Linda Mayoux	Community, organizations and across various themes (e.g. value chain development extension work, livelihoods)	Develop capacities, ownership and leadership of men and women to give them more control over their lives	Six- to twelve-month community-led methodology that can be implemented on its own or integrated into existing development projects. It starts with a Change Catalyst Workshop with participatory visioning and the creating of action plans. This is then scaled up through community action learning and later reviewed by the community.	Asia, Latin America, Africa	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Well-trained facilitators are crucial to GALS' success (especially during the first phase) 2. Pyramid learning principle may not always be effective 3. Adaptable to different contexts and purposes
Social Analysis and Action in Food and Nutrition Security (SAA in FNS) [66]	CARE	Community	Community-based and participatory approach that facilitates active exploration, reflection and challenging of social norms and practices and to support individual and community behaviors that contribute to more equitable gender norms and attitudes regarding FNS [67]	Key steps in the SAA in FNS process are (1) transform staff capacity, (2) reflect with the community, (3) plan for action, (4) implement plans and (5) evaluate. The duration depends on the specific adaptation. The manual includes 90 activities structured into 9 themes; each activity takes 45–60 minutes. Themes are (1) Introduction to Gender, (2) Production, (3) Productive Resources, (4) Access to and Control Over	SAA has been implemented in 20 countries including Ethiopia, Rwanda and Madagascar	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The manual should be integrated into sector-focused programs 2. Can be adapted 3. A gender and power analysis should precede the SAA in FNS 4. Creating a safe space for reflection and dialogue is critical

¹² This table includes tools to apply GTAs as well as to facilitate women's empowerment, given the similarities of these. Also, GTA practitioners have drawn in methods used for women's empowerment. See Annex B for a more detailed description of each.

Methodology	Developer	Scope	Objective	Strategy and duration	Countries implemented	Key points for consideration
				Income, (5) Leadership, (6) Time Use, (7) Women as Farmers and Value for Their Triple Roles, (8) Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and HIV Testing and Prevention and Support, (9) Family Planning.		5. Staff self-awareness training is a central part 6. Nine modules are adapted from the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) domains
Nurturing Connections [68]	Helen Keller Institute	(Extended) household	Promote women's empowerment by transforming unequal structures of power through a participatory curriculum [69]	The curriculum spans out over four months with four blocks: (1) Let's Communicate, (2) Understanding Perceptions and Gender, (3) Negotiating Power and (4) Acting for Change. Each block features weekly sessions held within peer groups (women, their partners/husbands, community leaders and elders). The block ends with a monthly "community meeting" or mixed session where all groups reflect together on what they have learned in this block. Each session is built according to an action learning cycle that begins with a game, or story, followed by a reflection about this activity. After this, a "learning" is formulated. The cycle ends	Bangladesh, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal	1. Flexible and found more effective when integrated into technical trainings. It is important that the approach not just be used as an "add-on" but be considered in the design of the whole program 2. Training of facilitators is crucial 3. Found "fun: and accessible – also illiteracy-friendly 4. Indirect approach: first games and role-play and then a discussion/reflection 5. On-going monitoring and evaluation

Methodology	Developer	Scope	Objective	Strategy and duration	Countries implemented	Key points for consideration
				with a planning phase where insights are translated into proposed actions and practice.		
Journeys of Transformation [70]	Promundo and CARE	Community	Promote women's economic empowerment by engaging men as allies in transforming harmful gender attitudes and behaviors that impact progress [71]	The training itself consists of 16 weekly sessions of each 2–4 hours divided in three themes: (1) a business block including sessions that focus on negotiation and decision-making patterns between men and women, (2) a health block on health and well-being and (3) a laws and policies block about GBV laws and policies promoting gender equality in Rwanda. Each session starts with a check-in, outlining the objective of the session, a followUp on the homework of the previous session, providing information about the topic and one to three group exercises and discussions. It ends with an assignment for the next session.	Rwanda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developed to complement existing projects, not as a stand-alone approach: it is adaptable (however, frequency and length need to be respected!) and context-specific 2. Five- to ten-day training of facilitators 3. Specific focus on masculinities

Implications of GTAs for capacity-strengthening and organizational learning

As discussed previously, compared with gender integration, GTAs are concerned with doing different things and doing things differently, which requires different skill sets as well as enabling organizational contexts. This section discusses the methodological implications of GTAs for capacity-strengthening and organizational learning.

Capacity-strengthening

Capacity-strengthening is another common element found in GTAs. This is understandable, given their purported far-reaching proposition. Participants – whether researchers, development actors or community participants – are engaging in new ways of knowing, understanding and learning. This requires “deep shifts in social and gendered ‘habits of mind’ and hearts from all involved” (Mezirow, 2000 cited by Cole, Koppen [24, p. 11]). And, this extends to how capacity-strengthening itself is thought of and undertaken, drawing on many of the same principles of knowledge and knowledge development that are integral to PAR but translated into **pedagogical approaches**. This includes ideas of **horizontal learning**, **valuing of different perspectives** and ways of knowing and learning, and understanding and incorporating **interrelationships between knowledge and power**. Capacity-strengthening in support of GTAs draws on principles of transformative learning that go “beyond knowledge and skills and [involve] a shift in mental models and personal beliefs” [28].

As a result, capacity-strengthening is premised on a **learning-by-doing approach**, as a complement to more traditional training. Learning-by-doing not only is appropriate for strengthening reflective and critical capacities, where training should be catalytic, but also helps participants encounter inequality and adversity, which are needed to understand alternative ways of believing and behaving [24]. For example, Farnworth et al. [44] describe augmenting each technical training session on fish and associated vegetable production with a gender module that encourages “deep reflection on gender and social norms, and... the rehearsing of new behaviors” [44]. Finally, learning-by-doing is also key to understanding complex systems [37].

A key challenge to participatory learning, as with participatory approaches more generally, is finding skilled facilitators experienced with such processes. They need to be well versed in triple-loop learning¹³ in order to be able to strengthen others in ways that are consistent with learning and knowledge approaches inherent to GTAs [34]. A related challenge is to use appropriate approaches to strengthening the capacities of facilitators themselves, as more traditional approaches, such as training of trainers that relies on cascading or echo-training approaches, are inconsistent with if not contrary to participatory approaches. They focus more on imparting a fixed body of knowledge, which participants learn by rote, than on facilitating knowledge generation based on participants’ reflection on their own experiences and knowledge.

Organizational learning

Within GTAs, organizational change is understood as a critical dimension, particularly from a social relations perspective that views organizations as manifestations of wider social institutions, reflecting and reproducing dominant gender norms and other “rules of the game”. This idea has long been argued in the gender and organizational development literature, where “getting institutions right for women” [73] concerns realizing, analyzing and transforming the informal and formal at the levels of both the individual and the systemic, including the deep gendered structures of organizations [74]. As

¹³ Triple-loop learning focuses on learning rules, learning to change them and learning to learn (e.g. Argyris and Schön 1996).

Cole et al. [24] contend, organizations “cannot merely present the new desired ways of thinking and acting in relation to gender and gender transformative approaches but also must embed them in (their own) organizational values, systems and procedures, since these surroundings play a key role in shaping individual actions and attitudes.”

Although critical [24], the **interplay between individual and organizational levels** can be difficult to navigate. De Vries and van den Brink advocate a bifocal approach of focusing on both individual development and organizational change by “developing individuals’ gender insight and change agency in order to bring about organizational change” [36]. This makes it possible, for example, to understand that working with individual women is not about fixing the women but, rather, is a part of gendered organizational change.

AAS took to heart the integrated nature of GTAs, capacity-strengthening and organizational change. Its approach is unique in the GTA literature in that core concepts are internalized and aligned as well as extended to consider how organizations need to change and capacities can be strengthened to support gender transformative change (see Box 4).

Box 4: A GTA-informed approach to organizational capacity development

AAS specifically talks about the “deep attitudinal and behavioral changes” that the integration and adoption of GTAs requires from individuals and organizations [24, 27, 28]. Accordingly, the program developed a Gender Capacity Development and Organizational Culture (GCDOC) approach that “supports organizations and staff members in developing capacities, skills and attitudes to appreciate, understand, adopt, adapt and integrate GTA in research programming and in the workplace” [28]. As such, the GCDOC approach provides a conceptual framework and pathway to align organizations and individuals for gender transformative change.

The GCDOC approach, developed by Silvia Sarapura and Ranjitha Puskur (2014), is structured around three elements:

- transformative learning;
- socio-technical regimes and governance;
- organizational culture and learning.

Transformative learning moves beyond formal learning of new knowledge and skills and includes personal development and deep reflection on norms and behavior that maintain gender inequalities. Transformative learning occurs within and through the organizational culture as well as the socio-technical regime and governance, or, in other words, macro-level trends, contextual drivers, social structures and practices. GCDOC aims to transform gender regimes through active learning processes at the individual, organizational and system levels. Key elements of this initiative include (1) recognizing and valuing the gender capacities and skills of staff and partners, (2) fostering gender equitable and inclusive organizational cultures and behaviors and (3) creating an organizational environment that supports learning, sharing and strengthening of gender capacities and capabilities of individuals and teams. In doing so, gender transformative practice will become part of the organizational DNA [28].

5. Measurement and assessment

Part of the organizational change necessary for GTAs relates to measuring and assessing projects and progress. Tracking GTAs requires a new way of thinking as to *what* and *how* transformative change is assessed in monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems. Inspired by feminist approaches to evaluation, it encourages institutions to recognize their own positions and practices in commonly found results-focused approaches to measurement when deciding what should be measured and whose voices count [33, 75, 76]. Because GTAs deal with transformative change and empowerment processes, the choice of indicators and MEL system is inherently a value-driven and political process [77]. In response, a GTA to MEL encourages a critical perspective to knowledge creation and privileges different ways of knowing, similar to why PAR is used and how capacity-strengthening is understood, which begins with ensuring that those whom gender disparities affect play a key role in formulating MEL systems [33, 45].

GTAs, by their very nature, deal with complex and non-linear social change processes at different levels, which vary across contexts, take time and are hard to observe and measure owing to the nature of the changes underway. This demands that the design for MEL must embrace complexity and purposively capture incremental and non-linear unpredictable processes of gender transformative change along with a description of outcome changes [33]. As noted by Batliwala [78, 79], this requires a GTA MEL system to be geared towards measuring interim changes among different groups, focusing on the *contribution* rather than the *attribution* of GTAs to these changes across longer timeframes. Tools such as *outcome mapping*¹⁴ and its use of *progress markers*, which were used by CARE and AAS, have proved effective in providing a more flexible and responsive approach to measuring contribution (Carden et al 2001, cited by Hillenbrand, Karim [33]).

Other key considerations of GTA MEL systems highlighted by literature include:

- 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;
- privileging voice and the idea that measurement processes should be empowering for participants and project staff alike.

Each of these points is explored in more depth in the paragraphs that follow.

Use of multi-level and multi-dimensional outcomes and indicators with specific attention to gender norms. Past gender measurement approaches have focused on the individual agency of women and the ability to control tangible resources (land, income, etc.), thereby overlooking norms. This provides an incomplete picture of gender equity outcomes, as they do not explain how these changes have come about or how they are linked to structural causes of inequality. GTAs stress changing gender norms as a critical lever for transforming structural inequitable gender relations [45]. Indicators should therefore capture how structures operate at different levels [45].

¹⁴ Outcome mapping is useful as a methodology for delineating spheres of influence of program partners and highlights the limitations of a program's contribution (not attribution to broader long-term transformation).

In addition to changes at the individual level for women and men, they should track changes in relationships at the household level (such as increased spousal communication, decreased incidence of family conflict) and beyond the household (e.g. expansion of social networks) to capture changes in societal rules and norms (e.g. community perceptions of gender equitable attitudes) that produce gender inequity. Because gender transformation is multi-dimensional, measurement that fails to capture how these different dimensions **interact** risks missing opportunities to extend the impact of interventions, overlooking unintentional harm and failing to capture how change in one dimension of a person's life affects another dimension.

While the field of measuring norms is still evolving and is often seen as notoriously difficult, promising approaches exist. These include the work of CARE to measure social norms to compare personal normative beliefs with behaviors and normative expectations at the community level. CARE's Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP) framework is based on the idea that empirical expectations (*what I think others do*) and normative expectations (*what I should do according to others*) are the basis for social norms. CARE takes a grounded approach to understand what gendered social norms exist for the specific behavior or practice; how they influence behavior and for whom; how and why they are changing; and what opportunities exist to catalyze norm change.¹⁵ The SNAP framework provides a basis for assessing change using primarily qualitative data collection tools such as vignettes (see below) and Photovoice.

Mixed methods approaches that privilege qualitative and participatory techniques alongside quantitative approaches [33]. The strengths of quantitative approaches to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) lie in their ability to document the changes achieved, but they are not able to explain the processes of gender transformative change. Qualitative approaches are noted for their ability to elicit information about social transformative changes and for being more equipped to capture different types of power inequality, such as intangible gender attitudes, relationships and norms, that quantitative indicators cannot always capture (see Boxes 5 and 6 and Table B for examples of mixed methods).

Participatory methods are singled out for their ability to elicit processes of change from the perspective of those marginalized by using different tools that encourage participants to create safe spaces for dialogue about what limits and enables gender equality as a process, and to step out of their normative conventions [26, 63].

Importance of tracking reversals and negative changes. GTAs, by their very nature, challenge dominant social hierarchy and will result in backlash, often in the form of violence (Bloom 2014, cited by Hillenbrand, Karim [33]). Monitoring these forward and backward changes should not be seen as discouraging, but rather an indication that power shifts are indeed taking place [63]. Measuring gender-based violence (GBV), for example, can therefore provide valuable insights into shifts in power, what areas are more difficult to move (yet are essential), those that may be easier (yet less relevant) and what prevention and mitigation efforts are needed[81]¹⁶.

Privileges voice and the idea that measurement processes should be empowering. At a bare minimum, MEL approaches for GTAs “should aim to reflect the process of transforming relations” that such approaches are aiming to affect [45]. As noted by Morgan, it requires a shift in who is reporting on outcomes, who is designing the measurement process and “who decides what or who the

¹⁵ See <http://same.lshtm.ac.uk/files/2017/12/Highlights-from-CARE.pdf> for more information.

¹⁶ This of course is not a condoning of GBV. Also, GBV data collection requires particular and specialized techniques so as ensure not re-traumatizing or reinforcing gender inequity and subordination (O'Hara, Clement 2008).

measuring effort is for” [45]. This implies that approaches to measurement should themselves be empowering to those whose lives GTA are affecting, explicitly involving them in the formulation of indicators and reflection processes.

The process of measurement should also be empowering for staff involved. A GTA approach to measurement requires organizational change and a whole new way of thinking about measurement – one that *prioritizes learning* in MEL. This requires a new lens and new skill sets (i.e. critical reflection) for measuring GTA outcomes, which embed a gender analysis framework into MEL as the first critical step [24]. This implies that, as part of the organizational learning process, organizations must invest in new MEL systems and in training for staff, to promote critical gender analysis skills. This requires a blended learning approach to capacity-strengthening that builds on conceptual training on GTAs backed by practical learning-by-doing capacity-strengthening [37]. Organizations need to create spaces for staff and partners to look at their own beliefs and attitudes and practices, and to think about how these affect their measurement process [45]. In this way, measurement of GTAs is empowering for staff, by facilitating self-reflection of their own positionality more generally within the process of transformative development and, in particular, their role in measurement that is consistent with GTAs.

To achieve this vision, a fundamental shift is needed from donors and the development community in terms of resourcing investment in reflection processes while maintaining a careful balance between an appropriate mix of methods and downward accountability to those whose lives are affected [78]. Important to note is that such reflection processes demand longer timeframes and are rarely a one-off activity. Mentors and coaches can guide the process.

Tools for assessing gender transformative change

Tools for assessing gender transformative change are both qualitative and quantitative. The boxes that follow elaborate some key resources for measuring (aspects of) GTAs. Box 5 provides examples of qualitative and quantitative measures of women’s empowerment, and Box 6 provides examples of how to measure attitudinal and normative change.¹⁷ Table B illustrates how these tools and resources can be integrated as a more comprehensive toolkit.

Box 5: Measuring women’s empowerment – quantitative and qualitative tools and approaches

Qualitative

A range of methods can be used to measure women’s empowerment. Key examples are below.

Ladder of Power and Freedom. The purpose of the tool is to provide meaningful contextual and comparative evidence of local men’s and women’s own assessments and interpretations of the levels of agency in their lives, and the key factors and processes that they perceive to shape their capacities for making important decisions. Ladder data has research and practical applications:

- multi-dimensional evidence on agency and local gender norms, and how they are interacting to shape gender roles and relations, access to opportunities and perceptions of well-being in a given social context;
- comparative qualitative measures of agency that remain contextually grounded;

¹⁷ These are selected from a range of tools available. See for example the GENNOVATE gender tools website (<https://gennovate.org/gender-tools-and-resources/>).

- dynamic findings that can contribute to longitudinal research, or to interpretations of quantitative measures of agency and empowerment in mixed methods approaches; and
- contextual and comparative evidence that can inform programmatic and M&E needs of relevance to more inclusive and effective agricultural innovation and wider development processes in an intervention area.

The Ladder of Power and Freedom activity centers on a ladder visual that depicts different levels of agency, ranging from having little power and freedom on step 1 to having power and freedom to make most major decisions on step 5. The tool also explores study participants' perceptions of whether and how agency and decision-making processes have changed over time and the reasons for these changes [82].

Case Study Method. The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and WorldFish undertook a collaborative project, "Women's Economic Empowerment in Aquaculture Production Systems in Asia: Comparative Case Studies and Synthesis from Bangladesh and Indonesia", to enable a greater understanding of the ways in which women's engagement in aquaculture may contribute to women's social and economic empowerment. The main question was, "In what ways, to what extent and why are different women in Bangladesh empowered or disempowered by their engagement in aquaculture?"

The project used a qualitative case study methodology [83], drawing on and comparing two cases (homestead fish production and factory-based shrimp processing). The main data collection comprised key informant interviews, focus group discussions using five different tools (including Ladder of Power and Freedom), in-depth interviews and field observations.

The two cases represent two specific types of aquaculture (fish and shrimp) and two specific nodes or parts of these aquaculture value chains (production and processing). The study (through the cases) focuses on three issues: (1) the extent and types of women's engagement with aquaculture; (2) the differential outcomes for men and women, both social and economic, as a result of this engagement; and (3) the factors that influence and shape this engagement and these outcomes.

Quantitative: Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)

The WEAI is concerned with measuring the empowerment, agency and inclusion of individual women in the agriculture sector. It was developed in collaboration between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). The index fills the gap in agricultural research in measuring individual empowerment outcomes that capture control over resources or agency within agriculture and is disaggregated by subnational region, age and social group as well as by each indicator. The index builds up "a multidimensional empowerment profile for each man and woman that reflects their overlapping achievements in different domains, and aggregates these" [84]. The WEAI defines five domains of empowerment in agriculture: (1) decisions about agricultural production, (2) access to and decision-making power about productive resources, (3) control of use of income, (4) leadership in the community and (5) time allocation. It also includes a measure of gender parity and differences in empowerment between men and women within the household.

Being able to track progress and demonstrate impact through rigorous monitoring, quantitative and qualitative protocols and indices like the WEAI is key to getting partners on board. This is also an area where IFPRI's work on the WEAI and thinking around GTAs could complement each other [85].

Box 6: Measuring changes in gender norms and attitudes – qualitative and quantitative approaches

Qualitative

Vignettes are fictional scenarios or short stories presented to participants during data collection, to which they are invited to respond and fill in their own details. The use of vignettes about third parties is a less personal, and thus less threatening, way to elicit perceptions on sensitive issues.

GENNOVATE used vignettes to map gendered activities and decision-making along the nutrition pathway. It allowed the exploration of key themes including division of labor; food production, purchase, processing, preparation and child feeding; decision-making at each of these stages; intra-household allocations of food; and reasons underlying these processes.

The vignette data informed the design of a gender-sensitive nutrition intervention in Northwest Vietnam. Analyses focused on comparing data across focus groups (within and across villages) to identify similarities, differences and the reasons behind these, as well as going “deep” into the reasons and processes explained by each focus group [86].

Quantitative

The **Social Institutions Gender Index (SIGI)**, developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, aims to understand the role of social institutions in producing and reproducing gender norms at national levels. Accordingly, the index is designed to “uncover the extent to which the institutions that govern social behavior and relationships, particularly gender roles and relations, have an impact on development outcomes” [87]. The SIGI single index is composed of five sub-indices, representing five dimensions: discriminatory family code, restricted physical integrity, son bias, restricted civil liberties and restricted resources and assets. Each sub-index, in turn, is composed of a selection of indicators and sub-indicators that measure gender discriminatory values, beliefs and practices. These dimensions reflect SIGI’s strong focus on social institutions at national levels and their role in producing and reproducing gender norms, but do not measure women’s agency or the different aspects of women’s empowerment.

While the dimensions and indicators of the WEAI are developed using both quantitative and qualitative data, both the WEAI and SIGI rely predominantly on a quantitative methodology. The WEAI team recently introduced the pro-WEAI, which measures women’s empowerment in various types of empowerment projects. This project-level WEAI includes a qualitative component to “gain a better understanding of the conditions of poverty and women’s disempowerment, validate the pro-WEAI domains and understand the linkages between project interventions and women’s empowerment domains” [88]. It includes attitudinal indicators to capture context-specific changes in norms and decision-making ([84]. This use of qualitative methods alongside quantitative methods is vital to capture contributions towards the complex process of transforming gender relations [1, 33, 45, 81]. The GENNOVATE tools and the case studies from WorldFish are qualitative and bring different dimensions to the fore.

Table B: Example of integrated methods package to assess gender transformative change in development interventions – WorldFish in Bangladesh and Zambia (the “WEFI for gender transformative change”)

Methodological aspect	Qualitative or quantitative	Tool	Notes
Changes in women’s empowerment	Quantitative	Women’s Empowerment in Fisheries Index (WEFI) (survey tool assessing relevant aspect of empowerment, adapted from the WEAI)	Include changes in decision making and in women’s self-efficacy; include other domains/types of empowerment indicators as per intervention theory of change
	Qualitative	Focus groups and interviews, including Ladder of Life and Ladder Power and Freedoms Tool (adapted from GENNOVATE)	As well as changes relating to intervention ToC, include assessment of unanticipated changes and potential negative outcomes
Assessment of changes in gender norms and attitudes and dynamics	Quantitative	Survey tool	Adapted from the Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale and others
	Qualitative	Focus groups and discussions	Adapted from GENNOVATE
Assessment of changes in key outcomes, such as production and/or livelihoods	Qualitative and quantitative	As needed, including document reviews	Adapted to specific intervention-related outcomes, e.g. changes in income, include assessing relationship between gender-related and other outcomes

Source: WorldFish

Table B shows how the GENNOVATE tools and the case studies from WorldFish can be integrated. It draws on WorldFish’s development of a set of integrated methods (WEFI Plus for GTA) to assess gender transformative change (including empowerment and other outcomes) in its pilots of GTAs in Zambia and Bangladesh in AAS and FISH. This assessment package reflects M&E and research principles identified as important for this work, including assessing changes in norms and attitudes as well as decision-making as part of instrumental agency, and qualitative as well as quantitative aspects. This package will be refined and made available by WorldFish (FISH) in 2019.

6. Considerations for implementing GTAs in agriculture

In this section, we flesh out a number of points arising from the review of the literature as well as interviews with informants using GTAs in agricultural domains – namely, conceptual integrity; the role of external agents in normative change; learning and capacity-strengthening for implementing GTAs; the potential for scaling GTAs; and organizational introspection and preparedness.

Conceptual integrity

Critical to the implementation of GTAs is a clear understanding of what it *is* (i.e., it is a change philosophy) and what it is *not* (i.e., it does not lead to “answers”). Also, as the name suggests, GTAs are *approaches* – different but specific ways of thinking about how deep and enduring change for gender equality can be facilitated and supported. For this reason, their conceptual base is their main strength. While ideas behind GTAs are theoretical and do not provide clear direction as to how they should be implemented, “there is nothing more practical than a good theory” [89]. In other words, these ideas are the theoretical foundations that animate implementation and action.

As a result, conceptual integrity is important to maintain the strength of GTAs, and this has two dimensions: conceptual clarity and conceptual coherence:

Clarity of concepts used in GTAs

GTAs are conceptualized differently by different programs and organizations. Within CGIAR, for example, many programs distinguish GTAs from gender approaches that do not explicitly challenge the *status quo* of gender relations: GTAs focus on intentionally working to transform them. Others position GTAs as a stepping-stone towards women’s empowerment. For example, IFPRI understands that benefiting and empowering women requires a transformation in the norms and institutions that restrict women’s full participation and expression [90]. Similarly, as Box 5 showed, some initiatives envision having gender transformative effects from their gender integration work.

How one categorizes gender work depends on the system of categorization. The challenge is that there are many different systems being used that emphasize different dimensions of change [91]. Regardless of the system used, it is critical to be explicit as to the kind of gender work being undertaken and to situate it within a spectrum of gender engagement. This can be a useful step towards conceptual clarity: articulating the character of gender engagement provides a vision for the aspired change and how that change can happen. This paper has proposed that GTAs are a *means* to deep and sustained change for gender equality that can improve development outcomes.

Key take-away:

- ✓ Be clear on what the change for gender equality being envisioned is and the nature and extent of that change.

Conceptual coherence

As with other innovative approaches to development, such as Participatory Rural Appraisal or Human Rights-Based Approaches to development, the challenge is how to practically implement GTAs in ways that retain conceptual integrity. Sometimes, ideas that are core to the innovation are eroded by it becoming a technical exercise and being scaled up or popularized to such a point that it no longer resembles the initial conceptualization.

Given their focus, gender and development efforts have long been characterized by a strategic deployment of language [92] to enable the ideas to resonate. This is also the case for GTAs, given that the term “transformation” in relation to gender is not always well received in the agricultural development community. Responses to this challenge differ. For example, some gender researchers frame GTAs as a more effective way of achieving development outcomes, including gender equality, through the ToCs articulated by particular CGIAR research programs [93]. Other CGIAR gender researchers carefully select language in order to avoid alienating colleagues and let the evidence resulting from gender research speak for itself [90, 94].

The critical question is not so much about the language used to cultivate critically needed buy-in from all levels of the program, but rather the extent to which concepts are maintained or compromised in the process: *can conceptual integrity be maintained while navigating complex interdisciplinary institutional contexts?*

Also, not all gender-related research and development interventions make sense as GTAs. Sometimes, a focus on equitable access to and control over development resources and benefits is a worthy end in itself. Using proxies for transformation, such as the focus on assets in the WEAI, may also be strategic [90]. If the end goal is more gender equality, does it matter if we blur the lines between GTAs and other approaches to gender in agricultural research and development practice?

Regardless of what terms one uses to describe GTAs or how they are implemented alongside other approaches, the main point is that the integrity of the idea, to address the foundations of gender inequity with the goal of achieving gender equality, is maintained.

Key take-away:

- ✓ Build in assessment and reflection processes that allow for monitoring of the maintenance of conceptual coherence and integrity.

The role of external agents in normative change

GTAs are often concerned with normative change, mostly in households and communities where programs are based. While the role of external agencies is often described as “facilitating” such processes of change, there is an implicit if not an explicit agenda regarding what norms should be changed. For example, reference is often made to “harmful norms”.

What should be the role of external agencies in affecting the norms of other people? What is the obligation of external agencies to acknowledge, reflect on and examine their own norms, at individual and organizational levels? What is clear is that GTAs have implicit normative gender biases. For example, the focus on women and men is often framed as husbands and wives, which is overtly hetero-normative and assumes a nuclear household. How does such a framework work for female-headed households? Or for farmers of sexual orientations and gender identities other than heterosexual? How are extra-household social relations of gender addressed, such as with extended family or polygamous marriages or those within the community, in the market?

With such normative considerations, what are the obligations of development agencies to consider the ethics of their work? Do ways of working allow for robust, reflective **ethical review processes**? While development agencies supporting development programming are not bound by the same rigorous ethical review processes as research organizations, they are still involved in a form of social experimentation that demands accountability to development participants. This becomes most evident with the interventionist nature of GTAs, discussed above.

Key take-away:

- ✓ Development agencies should be clear of their role in normative change, their own norms and how these affect implementation.
- ✓ Build in mechanisms for self-assessment, ethical review and mutual accountability

Learning about and capacity-strengthening for implementing GTAs

Work on GTAs has followed two main trajectories in two different sectors – agriculture and health. Much of the experience in agriculture has been in agricultural *research* for development (AR4D). Much of the work in health has been in sexual and reproductive health and rights *programming* focusing on normative change at the level of individuals. These two trajectories have a number of implications for implementing GTAs in the agricultural and natural resource domains.

The first concerns how to optimize learning *across the two sectors*. To date, there has been limited cross-fertilization of ideas across health and agricultural domains: they are largely separate bodies of work, with particular emphases and respective literature. That said, examples of cross-fertilization include Helen Keller International’s development of *Nurturing Connections* based on *Stepping Stones*¹⁸ and Promundo’s work with men and masculinities, which was initially undertaken in the context of working with men to understand and prevent GBV. FISH and AAS pro-actively drew on the health sector to design GTA work in Zambia and in Bangladesh.

Second, how can the learnings gained from GTAs in *agricultural research* be applied to *agriculture programming* without losing the learning and knowledge generation components inherent to how GTAs have been used in AR4D? How do implementing agencies maintain a continuous learning agenda? This is critical given the lack of robust data about implementing GTAs, in general and in programming in particular.

A related concern is that of capacity-strengthening. This paper has argued that GTAs require specific approaches that are aligned with their conceptual basis. Relatedly, specific skills and capacities are essential, such as self-reflective facilitation and behavioral change communication skills, which are not commonly found. To facilitate transformative learning, this requires an appreciation of the relationship between power and knowledge [59] and the different ways in which knowledge production can be about hindering or facilitating innovation [95].

An additional challenge lies in meeting demands for such skills and ways of working when scaling up (see next paragraph): more traditional approaches such as training of trainers are not sufficient, as informants have suggested. It is not a matter of knowledge transfer, as described previously, but internalizing and deploying approaches to training and facilitation in ways that are consistent with transformative learning.

Key take-away:

- ✓ Reflect on currently used learning and capacity-strengthening frameworks and approaches and assess their suitability for learning about and from GTAs and assess capacities for implementing GTAs.
- ✓ Build in learning and knowledge generation agendas to develop an empirical base for implementing GTAs in programming.

¹⁸ See <https://steppingstonesfeedback.org/>

Problematizing the scaling of GTAs

Scaling innovation has become a major concern for donors and development agencies alike. In an era of “aid effectiveness”, scaling up successes makes sense. There are, however, limited examples of innovation taken to scale. Linn [96] identifies a number of recurring themes that have made scaling possible: designing for scale from the start; drivers of scaling-up, such as strong leadership; and space for sustained growth. The latter includes policy reforms, creating institutional space resulting from appropriate organizational approaches and building institutions to manage scale.

Linn also identifies two main challenges for development agencies to scale innovations: first is the lack of systematic and effective focus on scaling owing to the “nature of governmental and bureaucratic incentives and the resulting planning and implementation mechanisms” [96]. Second is the ways development agencies work, which do not support systematic scaling: continuous generation of new ideas is privileged, continuity of initiatives and people is limited, partnerships are discouraged and M&E against longer-term objectives is not rewarded.

Scaling does not just imply increasing inputs and impact through multiplication; it entails different scaling processes that have cumulative effects and interact with other processes. As a result, there are unanticipated dynamics and negative effects. In particular, Wigboldus warns that a successful innovation is not always a generalizable solution if *all* components of the innovation are not in place. Lastly, scaling is a political agenda and attracts power. One needs to ask, “who and what legitimizes trying to change behaviours at scale?” [97].

These insights are critical to consider when thinking of scaling GTAs, given the specific features highlighted previously. What is the idea of scaling? Replicating using a “blue print approach”? The focus on household and community levels, often an entry point for GTA work in agriculture, may pose constraints to achieving large-scale impacts. For example, GENNOVATE research engaged different groups of women and men in critical reflection and discussions about gender norms in their community; however, how to extend the effects of such initiatives to community members beyond those involved in the groups discussions remains a question [93].

Or is scaling a matter of isolating the kernel of the innovation by controlling for the contextual factors and working with the seed in new configurations in new contexts? [97] This can be referred to as trimming or simplifying the innovation [98] – but what and how much can be trimmed from GTAs without losing the desired impact, given that scaling entails compromises?

Kohl states that impact degrades with scale [65]. The questions *vis-à-vis* scaling GTAs are then: what degrades? How much? Which features are critical and non-negotiable? [98] For example, as GALS – the PAL method – became popularized, its focus shifted more towards household-level change, despite having been initially conceived and deployed to affect systemic change.

Also, as indicated above, GTAs are resource-intensive (financial, human, time). Resource investment would need to be significant for it to be possible to move beyond select households to reach community and regional/national level [90, 93, 94]. How realistic is it to mobilize such resources?

Beyond more inputs and resources, what are other paths to scaling? Linn suggests working with a critical mass model where spontaneous or secondary innovation adoption is catalyzed [96]. But what “critical mass” entails is an un-researched area. This alludes to a broader question: *what is the critical mass for changes in the collective consciousness that can initiate spontaneous or secondary change in gender norms and underlying structures? Or does individual-level behavior change cascade into community or societal-level change over time?*

There is also a multiplier effect of scaling: increasing reach complicates what are already undeterminable, multi-level and multi-dimensional change processes entailed within GTAs. Scaling not only magnifies these processes but also renders more complex the interrelationships of change processes and their mutual effects [96]. It is important to take into consideration that scaling attracts power [97] where there are “losers” who will resist [98].

Lastly, what is the role of different stakeholders in scaling GTAs and how do they overcome the challenges identified by Linn (highlighted above)? In particular, what are the roles of development agencies? In particular, and this relates to the previous discussion on normative considerations, “who/what legitimises that you try to change behaviour at scale?” [97].

Key take-away:

- ✓ External organizations can play a catalytic role in supporting the scaling-up of GTAs. Part of this role is to support better understanding of what works and why, what can be trimmed while still maintaining the integrity of GTAs and how can this inform a ToC for scaling-up.

Organizational introspection and preparedness

Thinking about the role of development agencies requires organizations to honestly self-reflect and assess their openness and preparedness to facilitate systemic change. By definition, GTAs mean change for the implementing organizations and how they work.

For example, informants referred to a number of dominant development practices that are not always conducive to working in ways that support GTAs. These are about “the how” of development processes, including funding cycles; time and resources; partnerships and donor relations; flexible measures of accountability; and ethical review processes. First, **funding cycles** tend to have shorter timeframes than are needed for gender transformative change, or any social change processes for that matter. Second, as mentioned previously, GTAs are **time and resource intensive**: in order to work successfully with communities with normative and structural change, trust and longer-term engagements are optimal. As an inter-disciplinary and grassroots methodology, GTAs require multi-disciplinary teams of skilled and experienced professionals. Can donors support and sustain adequate resources, whether financial, temporal or human, to allow for such change?

Additionally, non-government and community-based organizations with long-standing relationships in communities are well placed for context-specific change. Investment is required to capitalize on these **partnerships** if GTAs are to be successfully rolled out where part of the investment may be for capacity development of partners to engage in GTAs. This also requires **donor relations** that are closer to partnerships than client–supplier. Also required are new types of partners (Interview, Ranjitha Puskur). Relatedly, the terms and conditions of donor support can be enabling of iterative, context-driven change processes when **flexible measures of accountability** are used, or can be inimical when top-down, rigid, indicator-driven [99] approaches dominate reporting and M&E.

Key take-away:

- ✓ Assuming a supportive, if not leading, role in GTA implementation requires organizations to assume perspectives, ways of working and procedures that are demonstrative of, or, at the very least, not contrary to, the ethos implied by GTAs. Are such organizations prepared to genuinely engage with self-analysis to identify their preparedness to assume such a role? Are they willing, able and committed to make the internal changes required to align with such an ethos? Is there the leadership, political will and resources to institute and sustain organizational changes?

7. Conclusions

What we do in the world reflects what we know about it, and what we know about it depends on how we go about knowing, or in other words when thinking about change we should start by thinking about thinking (Bawden and Macdam, 1988 cited by Kabeer [40]).

GTAs can enable enduring and structural change conducive to achieving gender equality, at least in terms of how most are conceived. A starting place in tapping into this potential is to understand that GTAs are not new ways of programming that can simply be adapted to current ways of working in development. They ask for a **change** in “business as usual”. As Bawden and Macdam suggest, this entails thinking about our own thinking: *what is the world view that is implicit in how we understand development, its implementation and our respective roles that informs how we see these?*

In this respect, the potential of GTAs – which lies in the radical proposition of attempting to address the foundations of gender inequity – is potentially realized when organizations are realistic as to their own capacities and room to maneuver and, accordingly, their comparative advantage in supporting transformative change. This is elaborated in the discussions concerning participatory action research, capacity-strengthening, measurement and assessment, as well as organizational learning for GTAs. All of these topics are concerned about democratizing knowledge and change in ways that challenge development hierarchies and allow for diversity and inclusivity.

While a certain amount of finessing may be required in order to render the idea of GTAs more palatable for organizations perhaps not accustomed to facilitating, engaging with and undergoing transformative change, they do need to be conscious of the ultimate end goal of GTAs – gender equality – and the potential for losing sight of this. *Making concepts more palatable must not come at the risk of losing conceptual clarity and sharpness.*

This has implications for the European Commission project and its three focus areas of policy dialogue, programs and working modalities:

Policy dialogue

- ✓ What is the role of large donor agencies facilitating deep structural social change? What are the implications for them as stakeholders within this change process and that they are imbricated in such change?
- ✓ In what ways can policy dialogue include reflexive practice that allows for self-reflection on power relations across the development landscape?

Programs

- ✓ In what ways is agricultural development currently being conceived, as a paradigm and in terms of its aims, that are conducive to gender transformative change? What ways are inimical?
- ✓ In what ways is global agriculture and agricultural development being organized that work for gender transformative change? What ways work against it?

Working modalities

- ✓ What are the modalities and ways of working that facilitate innovation and social change? What ways stifle innovation and social change?
- ✓ What are the measures in place that monitor if not abate the undermining effect that development processes can have on innovation and capacity for innovation?

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