

Gender Norms, Agency and Innovation in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management

CGIAR global qualitative comparative research initiative

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How do men's and women's capacities for innovating and improving their agricultural livelihoods differ in villages with very restrictive gender norms? How do men's and women's capacities for innovation compare in villages with more gender equitable norms? And what difference do these norms make for initiatives to escape poverty?

These are just a few of the questions being tackled by *Gender Norms, Agency and Innovation in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management*, a global research initiative that aims to learn from women and men across approximately 120 villages in 25 countries. This note offers a brief overview of the study approach¹ and status, and shares important milestones since inception of the global research program. A final section highlights early lessons on the data collection in 2014 shared by the large community of global study principal investigators.

Study approach

Innovation in agriculture and natural resource management (NRM) is vital to reducing rural poverty. But innovation processes that ignore gender inequality are limited in their impact and risk worsening the poverty, workload, and wellbeing of poor rural women and their families. Due to deep-seated gender norms—i.e. the rules of social life that prescribe differences in how men and women should interact and go about their daily lives—there are significant inequalities in the capacities of men and women to contribute to, benefit from, and manage risks stemming from agricultural innovation. Other formal and informal institutions also drive gender differences in agricultural outcomes, and may even outright disadvantage women. But how and why agricultural innovations improve women's lives in some settings but not others is not yet well understood. This knowledge gap limits our ability to design and scale out agricultural and NRM innovations that reduce gender inequality on the ground, and contribute more effectively to poverty reduction and improved food security, nutrition and environmentally sustainable livelihoods.

To build greater knowledge of these fundamental connections between gender equality and agricultural development, 13 of the CGIAR research programs (CRPs) are collaborating in a global qualitative comparative research initiative. The research objectives include:

¹ Please see the study's concept note for a fuller treatment of the study methodology and the literature on which it is based.

- Providing robust empirical evidence on the relationships between gender norms, capacities for agricultural innovation, and other key constraining and enabling elements of local opportunity structures that affect the achievement of the CGIAR’s development objectives; and
- Informing the CRPs’ theories of change and related research portfolios through identifying the gender-based constraints that need to be overcome in different contexts in order to achieve lasting and equitable improvements in agricultural outcomes.

The cross-CRP initiative is also investing in strengthening CGIAR research capacities and knowledge sharing on gender and comparative qualitative field research.

The global study’s research design is informed by a gendered agency-opportunity structure conceptual framework. The analytic approach gives primacy to local men’s and women’s own understandings, interpretations and experiences with innovating in agriculture and NRM. But the notion of opportunity structure recognizes that that men’s and women’s agency is differentially constrained by gender norms and other institutions that shape social status, access to opportunities, and the distribution of resources and technologies in their local settings such as the family, marriage, community and markets. Among other factors, the opportunity structure encompasses gender norms and institutional rules, the mix of resources available, and the interactions between the two. Resources include such things as plant diversity, agricultural land and irrigation systems inherited from earlier generations, technologies such as new seed varieties, soil fertility enhancement techniques and water management practices, health and education services, infrastructure, and social connections. While opportunity structures can act as powerful constraining elements on human action, these forces are not fixed. Both poor women and men sometimes find ways to maneuver, negotiate and innovate around these constraints to access new opportunities, and in this process forge more inclusive and effective local level institutions. With a close focus on the gender dimensions, this study seeks to uncover regularities across diverse cultural and agro-ecological contexts in interactions between local opportunity structures, men’s and women’s agency, and agricultural innovations which result in greater gender equality and poverty reduction on the ground.

The study design is framed to address the following research questions:

- How do gender norms and agency advance or impede capacity to innovate and technology adoption in agriculture and NRM across different contexts?
- How do new agricultural technologies or practices affect gender norms and agency across different contexts? Under what conditions can they do harm and under what conditions can they benefit different social groups?
- How are gender norms and women’s and men’s agency changing, and under what conditions do these changes catalyze innovation and lead to desired development outcomes (CGIAR SLOs)? What contextual factors influence this relationship?

Methodology. The investigation builds on the “medium-*n*” comparative qualitative research design pioneered by the World Bank’s global studies, *Voices of the Poor, Moving Out of Poverty, and On Norms and Agency*. The data collection is projected to generate approximately 120 village-level case studies from 25 countries. The sample spans world regions and diverse agricultural systems as well as important cultural sub-regions. Drawing on maximum diversity sampling principles, the individual village-level cases are selected purposively to ensure strong variance on two dimensions theorized to be important for outcomes: i) economic dynamism, and ii) gender gaps in assets and capacities. Case selection is also informed by the presence of CRPs’ activities in the research areas, and by the potential for joint CRP research and longitudinal research in the sites.

A standardized package of data collection instruments is being applied in each research village, and includes same-sex focus groups with youth and adults, key informant interviews, and in-depth semi-structured interviews. The tools were piloted in villages of Mexico and Uganda, and three regional training of trainer events prepared case study principal investigators for managing the fieldwork. Data collection began in April 2014 and will conclude in 2015.

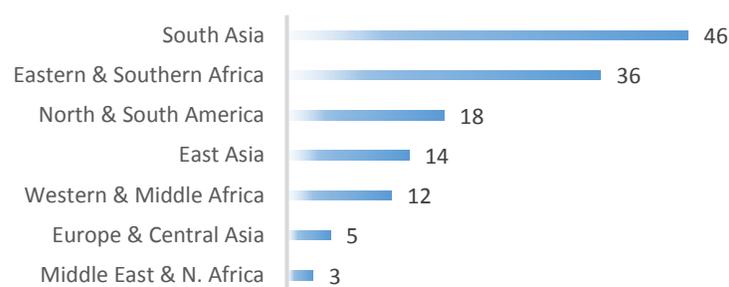
Global study outputs. Each CRP will specify and deliver its own outputs from the case studies it conducts. The global study will produce its own outputs, which are to be defined. Possible outputs include:

- A report of global comparative analysis across cases
- Regional, sub-regional and/or system-focused synthesis reports
- Cross-site dataset available for further comparative analysis and reports
- Site-specific datasets that can be used for future longitudinal research
- Guidance on how to use the results to inform the design and delivery of agricultural innovations
- Other outreach, including journal articles, briefs on main findings, blogs.

Implementation Status

The annex provides an overview of the global sample and status of data collection to date. Data collection is well advanced, with teams completing fieldwork in 56 of the 134 proposed (village-level) cases in 29 countries. Figure 1 presents the regional distribution of the global sample, indicating the largest share of cases to reside in South Asia followed by Eastern and Southern Africa. The sample covers a truly diverse set of agricultural and natural resource management systems as well as cultural and ecological contexts. Among the world's 15 most populous countries, the sample includes nine: India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Mexico, Philippines, Vietnam and Ethiopia.

FIGURE 1. REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF CASES



In designing their samples, as discussed above, PIs consistently sought to introduce variance in the extent of gender gaps in assets and capacities and in economic dynamism. The global study sampling guidance, however, also provides flexibility for each CRP to address their information needs. Some PIs selected cases where the data could provide a baseline to inform program designs or interventions that would soon be introduced. Others are using the study to support ongoing M&E. In short, most PIs are sampling

from villages where their CRPs are active or soon will be, and many are already envisioning community revisits to enable longitudinal work.

At an average estimate of USD 20K per case, this represents a total investment of USD 2.4 million by the 13 CRPs engaged. AAS, the CG Gender Network, RTB, WHEAT and MAIZE, and World Bank mobilized additional finance for the development and testing of the methodology, for workshops for the study design and training of trainers; and for preparations for the global analysis phase of the study.

Highlights of the global study initiative

The idea for a global qualitative study took off in a June 2013 Montpellier gender network workshop on methods. Two of the workshop sessions reviewed the comparative qualitative research tools developed by World Bank teams over the course of three major global studies, including most recently, *On Norms and Agency: Conversations on Gender Equality with Women and Men in 20 Countries*.

Inspired by the World Bank approach, a group of CRP gender specialists² organized a global study design group with active support from the Consortium gender advisor. The Study Design Group, over the course of a week-long Washington, DC workshop in October 2013, reached agreement on the global study objectives, key questions, conceptual framework, and comparative sampling framework. Workshop participants also made a running start on work plans, budgets and tools for operationalization of the global research initiative.

To ensure agility to move forward with the outputs of the Washington meeting, the CRPs' gender specialists that led the process, Lone Badstue (MAIZE and WHEAT), Paula Kantor (AAS), and Gordon Prain (RTB), formed an Executive Committee (ExCom) to manage and oversee the Study. A major first activity for the ExCom was drafting the Concept Note for the global study, which was completed in February 2014. The Consortium gender advisor, Jacqueline Ashby, as well as Patti Petesch (the consultant advisor) remained engaged and provided support informally to the ExCom throughout the start-up phase.

With financial support from MAIZE and WHEAT, RTB, AAS, and the World Bank's contracting of Patti Petesch, the design and testing of the study methodology began in earnest in early 2014. ExCom members Lone Badstue and Gordon Prain, along with four experienced Mexican field researchers, collaborated with Patti in the first trial run of the data collection tools in February 2014 in the central Mexican village of Jiquipilco. The Study Design Group and World Bank then provided valuable input on the standardized package of data collection tools.

In early March, the Consortium gender advisor announced the first call for cases for CRPs to join the global study. The Study Design Group imagined that 40 to 50 cases might be feasible, but interest among CRPs quickly spread beyond that.

² The first CRPs to engage included: [MAIZE](#), [WHEAT](#), Roots, Tubers and Bananas ([RTB](#)), Climate Change, Agriculture and Food security ([CCAFS](#)), Forests, Trees and Agroforestry ([FTA](#)), Aquatic Agricultural Systems ([AAS](#)), Livestock and Fish ([L&F](#)) and [Humid Tropics](#). They were soon joined by additional CRPs, including Agriculture for Nutrition and Health ([A4NH](#)), Water, Land and Ecosystems ([WLE](#)), [Dryland Cereals](#), [Dryland Systems and Grain Legumes](#).

In collaboration with six gender specialists³ based in CRP offices in Sub-Saharan Africa, Patti led a second and final pilot of the data collection tools in early April in a village outside Mukono, Uganda. This second methodology pilot doubled as the practice fieldwork for the global study's first regional Training of Trainers. Held in Kampala and Mukono, Uganda, and supported by the Consortium Office, RTB, Bioversity, and World Bank, the training prepared two Uganda field teams and principal investigators who would go on to train other teams in the region and beyond. Immediately after the training, the two Uganda field teams rolled out to begin data collection in four villages spread across the country.

The next major milestone for the global study soon followed in May with the second and largest regional Training of Trainers at CIAT outside Cali, Colombia. PIs from across world regions participated in the training, along with the Colombian field team who would shortly go on to collect data in four villages. A final training of trainers was conducted in Dhaka, Bangladesh in early November 2014 with support from RTB. Over the course of 2014, field teams travelled to some 56 villages in 16 countries to collect data with the standardized package of global study methods.

Difficulties with managing the global study set in over the summer months, however, when anticipated resources to fund the global study's significant need for a principal investigator and other central functions—such as ongoing technical guidance, supervision, and knowledge sharing—disappeared. The World Bank partnership was unexpectedly cut short in July due to shortfalls with their own donor funds. This was followed by the Consortium Office deciding it was unable to follow through on anticipated major financing for the central coordinating functions.

The ExCom members immediately launched into a fundraising campaign and continued to stay closely engaged. AAS and CIMMYT piggybacked finance to enable Patti to move forward with the detailed preparations for the data coding and cross-case analysis. In November, the large network of global study PIs redoubled their commitment to the global study exercise; and the Consortium Office responded favorably to the PIs' request to support a global study research workshop in advance of a January 2015 gender network meeting. The workshop would serve to facilitate agreement among the global study PIs on the cross-case analysis plans and procedures, formalize the global study governance, continue knowledge sharing, and strengthen resource mobilization activities for the next phase of the global study.

Early lessons from the fieldwork

Roughly a dozen PIs shared a host of valuable reflections on their field experiences with the global study thus far. The PIs consistently express appreciation for the overall methodology but report diverse challenges with preparing for and managing the fieldwork.

In each village visited for the global study, field teams are tasked with conducting six focus groups, eight semi-structured interviews, and a community profile. The focus groups, held separately with males and females, reach three different population groups: poor, middle class and youth. Study participants reflect

³ Vongai Kandiwa (MAIZE), Amare Tegbaru (MAIZE/Humid Tropics), Kristoffer Karlson (CGIAR Consortium), Netsayi Mudege (RTB), Anne Rietveld (RTB) and Sarah Manyanja (RTB).

on a wide range of issues, including the most important local agricultural innovations in recent years, how individual women and men as well as couples make various agricultural decisions, how women and men move their households out of poverty, barriers to entrepreneurship, and the aspirations of the youth for their future.

The two semi-structured interview instruments are conducted with four men and four women. These one-on-one sessions capture local experiences with agricultural and NRM innovations as well as life histories exploring movements out of poverty or remaining trapped in poverty.

Managing the standardized data collection needs for the study is *challenging!* The six instruments each specify different recruitment criteria for the study participants and require applying an interview guide with a lengthy list of semi-structured questions. Most tools also require facilitators to fill out flip charts—all the while fostering an inclusive and dynamic discussion. Moreover, the methodology stresses a set of protocols and formats for documenting the focus groups and interviews. Together these design elements are geared toward fomenting rich reflections and interactions among the study participants all the while their voices are being documented in a way that allows for systematic comparative analysis across the very diverse contexts where the study is being conducted.

As noted by Rebecca Elmhirst, a University of Brighton professor and a global study PI with cases in East Kalimantan, Indonesia:

The global study methodology provides a useful framework for examining core questions around gender norms, and in this sense, is appropriate for tackling the questions at the heart of this study of gender and oil palm. In particular, the themes explored in the ‘ladder of life’ exercise, and in the ‘aspirations of youth’ exercise easily map on to the core questions of the gender and oil palm study, with some small modifications to ensure questions around oil palm feature in the research tools. The methodology enables exploration of the ways norms may be shifting or being reinforced in the context of investment in oil palm, particularly as this has such profound impacts of local livelihoods.

In a useful and detailed set of reflections after her first case study in Philippines, Aisa Manlosa of World Fish concludes:

The likes are recurrent through the 5 days of data collection. These are:

- Teamwork and complementation of roles
- Dynamic and lively discussion among participants
- Usefulness of the tool in deepening understanding of community in a way that allows for comparison between groups

In her more recent reflections, Aisa adds, “We learned that standard case study method for field data collection is very useful for cross-site comparison. The diversity of tools used (e. g. straightforward questions, vignettes, secret ballots, ranking) is good for making the FGD sessions less monotonous. The vignettes are especially effective in making FGD participants think and in eliciting a dynamic discussion. In addition, the use of these tools, helps develop capacity of field team to undertake qualitative data collection.”

Similarly, Netsayi Mudege, a master trainer with CIP/RTB and who helped pilot the tools in Uganda before taking them to the field there and in Malawi, shares:

Participants really wanted to talk about themselves and their communities and this methodology was reflexive in such a way that participants were not only able to give information to researchers but able to question and think about their answers for example when asked why trends had changed or not changed. Although the interviews and FGDs were quite long participants were able to go the extra mile because the interviews were provoking them to think about their communities and also about themselves in way they had never thought about before. From this perspective I found the methodology to be quite useful. In all the experience was positive and looking forward to analyzing the comparative data sets.

Diana Lopez, with the CIMMYT team in Mexico, agrees that the data collection activities often sparked great enthusiasm among study participants:

We weren't expecting to hear how surprising and honoring it was for most of the women, the landless men, and particularly for the young women and men to receive a written or verbal invitation to participate in the study. They did not only appreciated being taken into account and having the opportunity to express their opinions in matters related to agriculture—a topic usually dominated by (male) landowners— but also to reflect about issues such as the freedom to make life choices, the factors that have affected family/community income, and on the education and job opportunities locally available for the young.

One young woman from the community of Puerto Rico said it was the first time in her life she had been invited to anything. The majority participated actively and concluded they wanted (and needed) more workshops, events and other forums to express themselves and learn 'useful things even from the community'—these 'things' included entrepreneurial activities as well as NRM, as pointed out in a community in Chiapas.

For me this is a “hidden” strength of the methodology...thanks to the variety of data collection instruments (including single-sex FGs), we are able to take on the viewpoints of those in the rural social periphery.

The generally favorable observations about their field experiences notwithstanding, PIs nevertheless offer many practical strategies for making the study more manageable in the field. Their tips are provided in bullet form so that PIs can quickly review and incorporate them in the future.

Methodology: Be sure to adapt, translate and pretest the tools (and team) for your context. Separate the longest focus group modules into separate sessions.

- ***“Need to adapt the manual!*** It's advisable to allocate enough time BEFORE the case study to think through how to adapt the manual to the specific needs of the CRP. I hope that A4NH PIs will employ (an adapted version) of the revised manual for Vietnam (developed by Marlène et al) so that we can make some valuable comparisons in regard to nutrition and health issues...” (Johanna Bergman Lodin, research fellow with Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and Global Study PI with cases in Nigeria)

- **“We split the methodology up** differently so had more, shorter guides. I think that worked and would be interested to hear how field work went in different contexts using the guide as is.” (Paula Kantor, AAS)
 - “Splitting the questions for the community profile among different key informants was very useful. We also separated the first FGD with poor adults based on the modules and that worked very well. The same people attended both FGDs. Participants really enjoyed the activity; laughed a lot and felt at ease. They said the questions were very relevant to their realities (agriculture, household issues) and that they learned a lot during the FGDs. The life histories also flowed well. The additional nutrition questions we inserted in the poor adults FGDs were well received.” (Marlène Elias, Bioversity)
 - “Consider splitting up the interview guides to avoid respondent (and enumerator) fatigue! The FGDs take many hours, and it’s difficult to keep everyone happy and in the mood. This becomes even more so, of course, if the CRP adds ‘own’ questions. Hence, it might be advisable to consider splitting up the interview guides into two different sessions with different participants, e.g. Activity C Module 1 can be carried out with one group and Activity C Module 2 with another group... Let me also add, that it was not only our FGD participants that became tired but also the enumerators, so also for their comfort this might be advisable.” (Johanna Bergman Lodin, research fellow with Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and Global Study PI)

- **“Translation of tools** into local language? (We did not do this due to that the field team said they preferred to have it in English since they mainly use Yoruba as a spoken language, but I think this did cause some hiccups along the road... (even if we did discuss how they were going to phrase the introduction statements to the tools, plus how to translate key concepts). Hence, I believe it’s advisable to translate the tools.” (Johanna Bergman Lodin)
 - “... some issues around translation (phrases such as ‘characteristics of a good woman’ and even ‘gender’ don’t translate in obvious ways), the global methodology has presented a number of challenges in the East Kalimantan oil palm context, which we have attempted to address through some additions to the research tools (also see text box below).” (Rebecca Elmhirst)
 - “Language of the tool is still quite stiff and formal. It was observed that desk-work translation is different from the conversational translation which flows when one is speaking with other people. The formal sounding translation was the result of the effort to be as close as possible to the original tool. This was also to ensure that facilitators will relay the question to the participants in a way that will retain the original meaning of the tool, leaving little room for a different interpretation. However, we also agreed that facilitators are free to ask the question in a more conversational manner once they understand what the question means.” (Aisa Manlosa)
 - “Although the Guide was translated into Spanish and revised many times by native speakers before the fieldwork commenced, during the study we kept adjusting the language used (or added notes to our printed guides) to make it as local as possible without changing the meaning of the questions. This was challenging at times. For example, although in Mexico the

term 'local council' is common, the concept of what it constitutes differs widely from one community to another. Whereas some communities use the term for government representatives, others refer to the land-owners' meetings (ejidatarios), or even to the residents' meetings. We had to understand these particularities to adapt our questions." (Diana Lopez)

- **"Some questions were not relevant for all localities** so had to be dropped depending on the situation while in other circumstances we also had to add some more context specific questions. This however will not affect comparability of cases as most questions were relevant across countries and across villages within countries." (Netsayi Mudege)
 - "Some questions may work better than others, depending on context! (Need for pretesting?) Some of the questions were really difficult to communicate to the respondents so that they would understand them. This may point to a need to actually pre-test the manual in a close site before executing the case study to identify such areas and allow for thinking through at more depth how to deal with it." (Johanna Bergman Lodin)
 - "The limitation we found with using the standard case study method and with being part of a global study is in terms of flexibility in accommodating comments and adjustments that other members of the Philippine Country Office team would want reflected in the tools." (Aisa Manlosa)
 - "While some questions worked well with slightly more educated audiences, in some cases especially those related to rating scales, it was not easy for participants to understand. We had to dilute such questions to a level that could be understood by the participants. This may make it somewhat hard to do a cross country comparison on such questions." (Netsayi Mudege)

Mobilizing and training field team: Recruit a skilled team, invest in adequate training, monitor closely quality of note taking, also train field coordinator and translators

- **"A lot depends on capacities field team members.** With most field staff having no or little experience in qualitative data collection the training might not be enough to get them up to conduct this study. So close monitoring is needed although sometimes difficult especially when taking place in other languages." (Netsayi Mudege)
 - "It's very important to have an engaged, experienced and motivated team leader who speaks the local language and can check and correct the work of the other team-members." (Anne Rietveld, Bioversity)
 - "The field team really matters! Most of our field team did not have any experience of QUAL data collection. This turned out to become a HUGE challenge. Also, to really get the right person as facilitator and as note taker is important. We actually had to swap roles within the team when it did not work out. Hence, it's probably good to allow them to practice the different roles during the training session to allow for the PI to assess which role they might be most fit for." (Johanna Bergman Lodin)
 - "Additional to the professional skills needed for each position (note taker, team leader, etc.), each team member should aim at maintaining a positive and balanced atmosphere –

- especially in such a time-demanding fieldwork. Three things that worked out for us were: keeping a respectful attitude towards our audiences and colleagues, spending an extra half hour bonding with the authorities or playing soccer or basketball with the locals, and sharing the team (or individual) experiences held during the day during car trips or over dinner.” (Diana Lopez)
- **“Trainings take time!** We spent 7 days and could easily have spent a few more!! Invest in sensitizing your local field (village) coordinator! We did not invest enough time in this, and it blew up in our face in both villages. In the first, it meant that the wrong participants were recruited for the different activities, and in the second village it became even a security issue and we had to sample a new village. (Johanna Bergman Lodin)
 - “There is also need for proper and intensive training to ensure that the tools are implemented exactly the same to facilitate comparison. I noted that because in Uganda the training period was relatively short (taking into account the long and intense tools and varied methods) that in some cases facilitators facilitated some sections slightly differently. However where we had more time for training this was not the case, although having the field pilot was really useful as it allowed us to spot problems and to solve them before starting field work.” (Netsayi Mudege)
 - “In a bilingual community in Oaxaca we felt the need to hire translators, especially for the Ladder of Life, and even if the ultimate result was good we ended up feeling that we could have used more time to train them in the methodology...but I guess we will always need more time!: (Diana Lopez)
 - **“Note-taking is the main issue;** even with training and practice and feedback some note-takers continue making summaries and interpretations. I advise to give note-taking a lot of attention in training and practice it especially when working with field team members that come from quantitative research background.” (Netsayi Mudege)
 - “The documentation part is tedious because it involves getting as much direct quotations as possible. The most effective means of documentation depends on the person. There are those that do well on laptops while others are better able capture the conversation by writing. Documenting through the laptop still require time for data cleaning but could be done by only one person. On the other hand, taking notes by hand is better done with two people working together as a measure for reducing the possibility that parts of the conversation are missed. It also makes typing up faster to accomplish because one could be reading the written transcript while the other types it up on the computer. Documentation was particularly challenging when the participants would start talking at the same time. This happened particularly with the women’s group. It required facilitation skills to give each person the opportunity to speak and be listened to, instead of talking at the same time.” (Aisa Manlosa)

Fieldwork: Recruit extra study participants, prepare back-up plans for participants who arrive late, ensure adequate supervision (in local language), and manage time carefully

- **Punctuality.** “FGDs were scheduled to start at 8am in the morning and 1pm in the afternoon. No FGD started during the set start time... On the second day...we agreed that it would be better to start soon as five participants have already arrived in order to shorten the waiting time of those who came early, to avoid finishing very late in the morning and afternoon, and to keep from losing participants who might go home if discussions take a long time before it starts. This worked for the group. It is important to remember that when a late comer joins the group, s/he should be given a brief background on why they are gathered, be oriented with the freedom-not-to-answer and confidentiality clause of the opening spiel, and be oriented with how the conversations is running by reviewing the previous question and some of the responses already given by those who are present.” (Aisa Manlosa)
 - “No matter how much you plan (or how many reminders you send), there will always be some people more punctual than others. This holds true especially for this study which is based on voluntary participation...So, we had to reschedule sometimes to adjust to the local needs...The important thing is to allow some flexibility in your planning to accommodate this.” (Diana Lopez)
- **Attendance.** “This was low particularly for some of the men’s FGDs.... Participants were personally invited or were informed through phone calls. They were also reminded through text messages....To address issue on attendance, it was suggested that in the next sites, we should be inviting more than the 8-10 ideal number of participants so that if others do not come, we will still be within the ideal number. And if all do come, it would be better to have more, than less the ideal number.” (Aisa Manlosa)
- **“Supervision.”** “For the Bangladesh case we had insufficient staff oversight of the field work process; training was solid but we needed experienced, Bangla speaking staff in the field with the team. AAS used an external agency for the Bangladesh cases, unlike in the Philippines where staff collected data. This also made a difference to understanding agriculture/aquaculture and the programs of WF.” (Paula Kantor)
- **Time management.** “The life histories were difficult for many field members; or it took hours and hours or they didn’t capture all info right (sometimes it also went well).” Netsayi Mudege
 - “It was a new experience for the facilitators to use standardized tools that required faithfully keeping to the questions and not veering away. They had to be conscious about the need for standardization to enable cross-site comparison, and to be very conscious about managing time given the many questions contained in each tool. Members of the team were aware that there are questions that needed probing but that not all should be probed. We were also aware that responses that could be further explored in a different activity such as the in-depth interviews.” (Aisa Manlosa)

- “The first three days spent on FGDs were “super tedious” but “very fruitful” – as described by the team members.... The individual interviews were easier to facilitate and document.” (Aisa Manlosa)
- “FGDs flowed smoothly with members of the team working together, each fulfilling a specific function.” (Aisa Manlosa)
- “For posting of the visuals, it was observed with the women’s group that it saves time to post the visuals on the wall in advance. These visuals are folded so that participants are not able to read the contents; and are unfolded when they are to be filled out.” (Aisa Manlosa)
- “The respondents suggested that study tools (FGD and Interview) are interesting, focusing varied areas but very intensive. It takes 3-4 hours to operationalize each tools, Some questions need more clarification and discussion to make the respondents understand and response. For example: Ladder of Life in Activity C and Ladder of Power in Activity D & E. As well as the respondents faced difficulties plotting themselves in different categories of timeline in individual life story. Sometimes, respondents lose patience to successfully complete the tools due to time constraints.” (Shawkat Begum, RTB)

In short, the early observations from the PIs indicate that the global study methodology is doing its job of generating useful information on the study topics; yet the large-scale cross-case approach requires refinements and careful management all along the way. Although she faced many stumbling blocks with her fieldwork, Johanna Bergman Lodin concludes: “Very interesting narratives may emerge! Despite all the hurdles we went through in Nigeria, some very interesting narratives emerged. Hence, I guess the point I wish to make here is that at the end of the day it’s definitely worth it, even if it can be quite challenging while in the field.”

Box 1. Reflections on applying global tools to assess local oil palm dynamics

Rebecca Elmhirst

Incorporating the emphasis on ‘innovation’ in relation to oil palm. In this study, we deal with ‘innovation’ in two senses, first, seeing ‘oil palm’ as an innovation (where smallholders or other entrepreneurs have adopted oil palm to better their livelihoods), and secondly, investigating ‘innovations’ forged by communities as they adapt to the oil palm context. However, conceptually, the concept of ‘innovation’ reflects an overarching concern with capacity and capability, and whilst these elements are important themes within any consideration of gender norms, we have been keen to ensure that our methods enable a deep engagement with structural issues: land tenure, governance, the role of the corporate sector, landscape histories and the kinds of path dependencies these can throw up. Additional questions to capture some of these issues have been included in the methodology (in the community profile and focus group questions), specifically around processes of land acquisition and exclusions from other forms of livelihood, and the gender effects of these.

Emphasis on ‘communities of place’ – even from our initial scoping, it became evident that migrant networks are a critical dimension of oil palm investments in East Kalimantan. Migrant ‘entrepreneurs’ from other parts of Indonesia, particularly Sulawesi, are playing a key role in landscape and livelihood change here. In Harapan Jaya, the transmigration community, further migration is also important: in recent years around 50 percent of the transmigrants have sold their lands to migrant land investors from Sulawesi and elsewhere, then moved to other

areas to seek better livelihood). In other words, this is a landscape of intense geographical mobility for men and women, with large-scale in-migration (particularly from Sulawesi) and out-migration (particularly of transmigrants). Emerging patterns in the data suggest kinship networks that link the area with Sulawesi (and therefore Bugis and other ethnic groups) are key. Gender norms thus need to be understood in relation to migrant networks. For this reason, the definition of 'community' used in the global study to delimit case studies may limit the extent to which key social processes (such as the reshaping of gender norms) associated with oil palm investment can be ascertained. Some additions have been made to the global study methodology questions to address this, primarily by considering migrant life histories, and by exploring migrant networks in the community profiles. Moreover, the ways in which the team is constructing community profiles, coupled with key informant interviews beyond the community, will probe the ways in which external forces have shaped change – including gender norms, discourses and practices - in the communities historically (e.g. the role of logging companies, followed by commercial timber plantations and now oil palm, processes associated with political decentralisation and regional autonomy, and more recently, connections between oil palm developments in Malaysia and in Indonesia, linked as they are through circuits of labour and investment capital).

Individualised lives and livelihoods – an underlying thread within the methodology is an emphasis on individualised lives, aspirations and livelihoods, which sits uneasily with the social context particularly of Dayak communities, where lives are more communal, where there is still an emphasis on sharing, and on collective arrangements rather than overt individual enrichment at the expense of others. Concepts such as 'land ownership' carry a particular meaning in the sense that they have been imposed from outside. Many of the questions in the global study reflect a particular understanding of property and ownership, which don't travel well, particularly in Dayak communities. As the study also involves work in communities where understandings of property, ownership and individual aspiration are closer to that implied in the methodology (e.g. in the transmigration community, in the way small-scale land investors are narrating their 'purchase' of land), we have had to be careful in enabling a comparison without imposing categories that 'fit' some contexts better than others, and that therefore are not 'neutral'. In other words, we have to be mindful of the norms that underpin the study itself.

Gender norms and conjugal partnerships – another challenge faced in the East Kalimantan context is the emphasis on gender norms through a husband-wife dynamic. Whilst this may be important, other dimensions of gender relations may carry more weight in contexts where gender hierarchies within conjugal partnerships are less pronounced than is seen in other parts of the world. The role of wider kinship networks, extended families, clans and so forth play an important role in shaping, reinforcing and (possibly) challenging gender norms, especially where such social forms (e.g. clans) are meaningful in terms of contesting or accepting oil palm investment. Whilst the global methodology goes some way to addressing these kinds of questions, some of the wording of questions does not translate easily in a Dayak context. Where there has been space, probing questions have been added to the methodology.

Annex: Global study sample

<i>COUNTRIES</i>	<i>CRP</i>	<i>PI</i>	<i>Region-village</i>	<i>Innovation</i>	<i># Cases planned</i>	<i>Fieldwork completed</i>	<i>2x2 reported</i>	<i>Lo g. gap s - Hi eco. dyn. [A]</i>	<i>Hi g. gap s - Hi eco. dyn. [B]</i>	<i>Lo. gap s - Low eco. dyn. [C]</i>	<i>Hi g. gap s - Lo eco. dyn. [D]</i>
AFGHANISTAN	WHEAT	PAULA			8						
BANGLADESH	AAS	RITA S. & Paula	KHULNA, SATKHIRA & BARGUNA:	RinD; facilitated learning	6	6	6	1	3	1	1
BANGLADESH	RTB	GORDON & SHAWKAT	3 districts: (Jessore, Faridpur and Barisal.	OFSP planting material enterprises	3	1			1		
BANGLADESH	WHEAT	TASHEEN & LONE			6						
BURKINA FASO	DC + GL	WENDA		sorghum, millet and peanuts	2						
BURUNDI	HUMID TROPICS	ANNE R. + HOLGER			1	1	1			1	
CENTRAL AMERICA	CCAFS	JEN T.	TBD		3						
COLOMBIA	RTB	KAYTE M.	CORDOBA & SUCRE	Cassava	4	4					
COLOMBIA	CCAFS	JEN T.	CAUCA		3						
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO	HUMID TROPICS	ANNE R. + HOLGER	SOUTH KIVU		1	1	1				1
ETHIOPIA	MAIZE				2						
ETHIOPIA	WHEAT	PAULA			4						
ETHIOPIA	Grain Legumes	Esther									
INDIA	WHEAT	Tahseen	Bihar		5						
INDIA	WHEAT	Tahseen	UP		3						
INDIA	WHEAT	Tahseen	MP		2						
INDIA	WHEAT	Tahseen	Punjab		2						
INDONESIA	FTA	REBECCA and Mia Siscawati	E. Kalimantan	Oil Palm investments	5	5	5				5
KENYA	MAIZE				4						
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC	Bioersivity	Marlène	Karalma, Jalalabad, Kyrgyzstan	grafting fruit and nut trees	1	1	1		1		
MALAWI	RTB	NETSAYI	NTCHEU & CHIKWAWA	OFSP and seed potato technology	2	2	2		1	1	
MALAWI	MAIZE	VONGAI	Kasungu & NKHOTAKOTA		2	2					
MALI	DC + GL	WENDA		whole grain millet	4	4	4	1		1	2

<i>COUNTRIES</i>	<i>CRP</i>	<i>PI</i>	<i>Region-village</i>	<i>Innovation</i>	<i># Cases</i>	<i>Field work completed</i>	<i>2x2 reported</i>	<i>[A]</i>	<i>[B]</i>	<i>[C]</i>	<i>[D]</i>
MEXICO	MAIZE	LONE	OAXACA & CHIAPAS	Maize germplasm, conserv. Ag; postharvest storage	6	6	6	2	1		3
MOROCCO	DS + 3.1	DINA			3	3					
NEPAL	WHEAT	TASHEEN			4						
NIGER	DC + GL	WENDA		sorghum, millet and peanuts							
NIGERIA	MAIZE	AMARE	2 sites in N. in Kaduna State; 2 in S. in Oyo State		4						
NIGERIA	HUM TROPICS A4NH	HOLGER & JOHANNA	Oyo & Osun states	cocoa and cassava.	2	2	2		1		1
PAKISTAN	WHEAT	Paula			4						
PAKISTAN	WHEAT	Tahseen & Lone	Punjab & Sindh		6						
Peru	RTB-CCAFS	Gordon	Andean highlands		2						
PHILIPPINES	AAS	AISA M./Miranda M	VisMin Hub: Galas, Mancilang, Mahayahay	RinD; facilitated learning	3	3	3	2		1	
RWANDA	HUM. TROPICS?	Anne R.			1	1	1		1		
TANZANIA	A4NH + SLU	JOHANNA	Mkuranga; and Uvinza district	cassava	2						
TANZANIA	Grain Legumes CRP	Esther		pigeon peas and groundnuts	2						
TANZANIA	MAIZE	LONE B.			4						
UGANDA	RTB	NETSAYI M.	NTOVE & SOROTI		2	2	2	1			1
UGANDA	HUM TROPICS	ANNE R.	KIBOGA & ISHINGIRO	integrated tree-banana-livestock systems; Banana XW control	2	2	2		1		1
UGANDA	Grain Legumes CRP	ESTHER		pigeon peas and groundnuts							
UZBEKISTAN	DS + 3.1	DINA			4	4					
VIETNAM	RTB & CCAFS	Gordon, Kayte and post doc	Central Vietnam and Yen Bai in the north	Cassava	4						
VIETNAM	Bioversity	Marlène (w. Gina Kennedy and Jessica Raneri)	Mai Son district, Son La Province (but need to confirm this)	Nutrition questions added	2	2	2	1	1		
ZIMBABWE	MAIZE	VONGAI K.			4	4					
<i>29 countries</i>					134	56	39	8	11	5	15