



# GENVAD

PROJECT TRACK RECORD:  
**GENder in VAlue chain Development**  
2012-2015

**WEMAN** 

 **OXFAM**



A world where women and men are able to realise their full potential as economic, social and political actors, free from all gender discrimination, for empowerment of themselves, their families, their communities and global humankind.

## Colofon

Thies Reemer, Oxfam Novib, 2015

Front cover picture: Oxfam in Uganda, 2014. Joseph and Victoria Wadribo, Panyar Saving group, working with Oxfam Novib partner Community Organisation for Rural Enterprise Activity Management (CREAM), Arua District.

## SUMMARY

Project title	Gender and Value Chain Development – GENVAD: Community-led value chain development for gender justice and pro-poor wealth creation
Period	November 2011 – June 2015
Lead implementing organisation	Oxfam Novib
Back donors	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), MFSII, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands
Value of project	€2,003,600 (including matching funds)
Brief description of the main activity relevant to the current contract:	Empowerment of women and marginalised groups in agricultural value chains, CSO capacity strengthening
Countries	Uganda, Rwanda, Nigeria
Brief description of the role of the Candidate to the current contract:	Oxfam Novib was responsible for contract and partnership management, CSO capacity strengthening on empowerment of marginalised groups in value chains, influencing IFAD-supported value chain development programmes led by governments.

This reference of the “Gender and social inclusion in agricultural value chains in Sub-Saharan Africa” (GENder in VAlue chain Development: GENVAD) programme demonstrates the experience of Oxfam Novib to:

- i) Empower the most marginalised groups in agricultural value chains in Uganda, Rwanda and Nigeria;
- ii) Strengthen CSO capacities on community-led empowerment and gender transformative methodologies, and influence IFAD and governments in Sub-Saharan Africa.

With a budget of €2,003,600 (IFAD: €1,245,000; Oxfam Novib: €759,600) between 11/11/2011 to 31/12/2014, in total 57,572 people (67% women) from marginalised communities have acquired action learning skills and platforms for **empowerment**. Around 158,000 people benefitted indirectly. Improvements in gender relations and livelihoods were reported by 70% of the women. Marginalised groups targeted were vulnerable widows, co-wives in polygamous households, ex-abductees, non-literate adults and youth with war trauma. These were included in functional groups linked to value chains, and acquired leadership roles.

As a result of GENVAD, 22 **CSOs** integrated empowerment methodologies into their work, and 76 associations of marginalised women and men have a more respected voice in value chains. Local governments and businesses have responded by promoting empowerment of marginalised groups in economic planning and supply chain management.

The program influenced IFAD investments in government-led programmes and policies in Africa: in six countries and eight programmes, good practices and empowerment methodologies were integrated.

The programme shows that with a deliberate and planned effort it is possible to change deep-rooted gender norms and relations within project timeframes. Marginalised women and men can be resourceful and creative in addressing their challenges, and can create new social norms that reverse the direction of peer pressure.

## BACKGROUND ANALYSIS

Pro-poor value chain development (VCD) has been promoted by IFAD and other institutions for combining economic growth and poverty reduction. While absolute poverty is declining globally, socio-economic inequalities have grown.

Agricultural value chains (oilseeds, grains, cocoa and horticulture) in Nigeria and post-conflict areas in Uganda and Rwanda largely depend on the informal sector. Large numbers of women and men smallholders, (landless) workers and small-scale (barter) traders depend on these value chains for their livelihood, many earning less than 1 USD per day.

Women play a major role in production, supply and processing. Particularly vulnerable are co-wives in polygamous households; young women; ex-abductees; widows; adults and youth with war trauma/disability, male alcohol addicts, and women whose husbands were imprisoned after the genocide in Rwanda. Social norms dictate that men control assets and income, girls do not inherit and sons are preferred for schooling and health care. Women in patrilocal marriages who experience (sexual) violence and abuse cannot leave their husbands without also leaving the children with the husbands' families. Women face a disproportionate labour burden, combining care tasks,



Figure 1: Cocoa pods and seedlings, FADU, Niger (Oxfam 2012)

household chores and productive work. Without control of income and access to services women lack the motivation to increase the quality of products. Cultural norms and peer pressure constrain men's ability to contribute to household welfare.

Shifting from poverty alleviation projects to VCD, many CSOs and IFAD-supported government services address the symptoms and overlook the root causes of inequality and exclusion. They tend to focus on technologies and products rather than on systemic issues such as social norms and beliefs that drive gendered behaviour. Often the better-off benefit while vulnerable women remain marginalised. Before the programme, CSO partners lacked capacity to provide vulnerable people with the platforms, skills and methodology to deeply analyse their situation and empower themselves.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

With its three-year GENVAD program, Oxfam Novib aimed to empower women and men from the poorest and most marginalised households, to establish equitable participatory economic decision-making and to contribute to sustainable pro-poor value chain upgrading. Specifically:

- i) 35,000 vulnerable women (67%) and men and a further 65,000 indirect beneficiaries in rural Nigeria and post-conflict areas in Uganda and Rwanda, have the skills to empower themselves, and to negotiate a better position in value chains. Indicators included increased income, savings or productive assets, more gender equitable division of labour and decision-making, women's secure access to land and control over assets, and a respected voice of marginalised groups in at least six value chains.
- ii) Empowerment methodologies are localised/integrated into policies and practices of CSOs in Uganda, Rwanda and Nigeria and disseminated for scaling up in Sub-Saharan Africa. At least 10 CSOs and four IFAD-supported programmes in at least six countries have the capacity to deliver gender-sensitive and -inclusive programs.

## CHOICE OF INTERVENTIONS

The programme used social justice and business arguments for gender equality. Economic interventions need to include gender as a strategic issue, and investors need to value the mutual benefits of gender justice and economic development. Oxfam Novib believes that empowerment requires an holistic approach to: i) change women's and men's consciousness and gender relations; ii) to increase access to and control over services and resources; iii) to change social norms and beliefs as well as formal rules/policies that reproduce inequality.

The Gender Action Learning System (GALS) was used as the overarching approach. GALS is a structured community-led empowerment methodology aiming at constructive economic, social and political transformation. It gives women, as well as men, more control over their lives to catalyze a movement for gender justice. GALS is not a simple tool or methodology but it includes a wealth of instruments and visual diagramming tools that can be adapted in many ways for empowerment. For achieving change at scale, Oxfam Novib worked at three levels:

- (i) **Household/community level:** community-led gender action learning to change gender relations and social norms, and create win-win collaboration with powerful



*Figure 2: Cooperative members in Uganda analysing emotional, financial and power relations and prioritise what they want to change (Linda Mayoux, 2011)*

stakeholders to improve livelihoods and gender equality.

Instead of working through existing leaders, Oxfam Novib trained CSOs to facilitate empowerment processes with marginalised and discriminated people among smallholders, landless workers and small scale (barter) traders, the majority earning below 1 USD per day. They developed vision journeys for change, and learned how gender inequality prevents both women and men from achieving their visions. This triggered them to change gender relations at household level and norms in their functional groups. Inspired by their visions for the future, they reduced alcohol abuse and domestic violence, changed gender division of labour and promoted women's property rights. This inspired their peers. The strongest "peer trainers" include marginalised co-wives in polygamous families who improved their position, male alcohol addicts who stopped drinking and became caring husbands, widows who improved their livelihoods and gained respect in the community, and young women who gained leadership positions. Based on their own interests to train others, they form mentoring networks to help or influence others to change. Instruments to deepen and expand the changes include: peer-to-peer household mentoring, men's forums, interactive theatre, participatory reviews with community-led monitoring and personal visual diaries.

- (ii) **Organisational level:** capacity strengthening for local CSOs (NGOs, producer/trader associations, WROs, MFIs, networks, business service providers and social groups) on community-led empowerment and gender transformative methodologies. Oxfam Novib, through workshops, south-south exchange, work-based reflexive learning and support missions, strengthened CSO capabilities to integrate methodologies into their work, and facilitate gender equitable win-win collaboration with businesses and local government bodies in Uganda, Rwanda and Nigeria.
- (iii) **Donor/investor level:** advocate for community-led empowerment methods to be integrated into policy, programme design and implementation of IFAD's investment portfolio in Uganda, Rwanda, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Mozambique. Networks Agri-ProFocus, ESAFF and PELUM were used for dissemination and coordination purposes. Work in the cocoa value chain was linked to the global "Behind the Brands" campaign. IFAD knowledge platforms were used for influencing.

## INNOVATION

GALS is innovative in the way it transforms gender and power relations in economic development interventions, and the way it demystifies the analysis of gender roles and gender relations, making it accessible to everybody. Drawing, rather than writing, challenges educated people to be specific and triggers non-literate people to express themselves.

Non-literate participants turned out to be stronger change makers. During implementation GALS was streamlined to link gender relations, livelihoods and enabling environments, and adapted to local contexts. Partners developed ways to influence local government to support social equality using GALS.

## RESULTS

Results were measured through participatory self-monitoring, local and multi-stakeholder reviews, case studies, stories of change and evaluations.

### **Community-level: empowerment**

The overall total of 57,572 trainees (38,467 women and 19,105 men) exceeds the planned number (evaluation, 2015). Around 158,000 indirect beneficiaries were reported. More than 26,000 women (almost 70%) report remarkable changes in more equal sharing of labour, women's decision-making power and control of assets, while 49% of the women also report more secure access to land. Fathers started including daughters in wills so that they can inherit property. For some 70% these changes translated into significant income increases; around 60% increased savings and resources for productive investments, with better production and marketing, attributed to more equitable win-win collaboration with buyers.

By reducing alcohol abuse and domestic violence, families were able to increase investments in education for boys and girls and reduce food insecurity. Men support each other to challenge norms, carrying out domestic chores (culturally seen as women's work) like fetching water and firewood, and cooking food. This reduced women's workload and improved communication in the family. By recognising formerly invisible and unrewarded work, asset-poor co-wives in polygamous marriages and widows were included in marketing associations. Evidence of self-replication without external support from the programme demonstrates the sustainability of these changes.



**Figure 3: Farmer couple in Rwanda presenting their empowerment plan (BAIR, Rwanda 2013)**

#### **CSO capacities**

As a result of the capacity strengthening trajectory, 76 associations of marginalised women and men have a respected voice in 14 different value chains. Twenty-two CSOs have integrated GALS into organisational procedures and economic interventions beyond the programme's timeframe. Reviews clearly show increased capabilities to empower marginalised and discriminated groups, especially by changing gender relations and social norms, embedded in livelihoods programmes. Five CSOs became active resource centres for learning about GALS. Sustainability shows also in the uptake of GALS by local governments and businesses.

#### **Influencing**

At the donor/investor level, eight IFAD-supported government programmes in six countries have integrated GALS. GENVAD has been a major driver in IFAD's Policy and Technical Division to promote the use of "Household Methodologies" for more pro-poor targeted policies, social inclusion and gender transformation in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## **FLEXIBILITY AND LEARNING CAPACITY**

Changing deep-rooted gender relations requires careful planning and flexibility to adapt. Oxfam Novib organised regular reflexive learning to challenge and support CSOs in their creativity to use principles of equality, participation and inclusion. Partners developed personal and organisational learning plans during annual events. At national level, partners were linked through quarterly learning meetings. Progress reports by Oxfam Novib show a wealth of lessons. Gender issues sometimes slide off the agenda in favour of economic issues. The framework and process guide was

therefore revised and a new manual was published. It enabled CSOs to link social change more strongly with livelihoods, and scale up faster. Exclusion of government in some cases led to resistance or outright blockage, stopping communities from reaching their goals. Adaptations to include the interests of local government resulted in mutual support.

## TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Information gathering is community-led and CSOs have been fully engaged in the development and implementation of GENVAD. Oxfam Novib applies agreements within the Oxfam confederation to ensure transparency and accountability. Oxfam Novib is a member of the INGO Accountability Charter, Partos ISO9001 certified and reports publicly according to the standards of GRI, VFI, CBF, ANBI and IATI. With the digital tool Atlas, Oxfam Novib provides direct access to project information.



**Figure 4: Woman trader presenting gender challenges for women in rice trade in Uganda during a value chain negotiation session (Thies Reemer, 2013)**

WEMAN STANDS FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT MAINSTREAMING AND  
NETWORKING (WEMAN) FOR GENDER JUSTICE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.  
IT IS A GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF OXFAM NOVIB.

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