

GENDER ACTION LEARNING SYSTEM

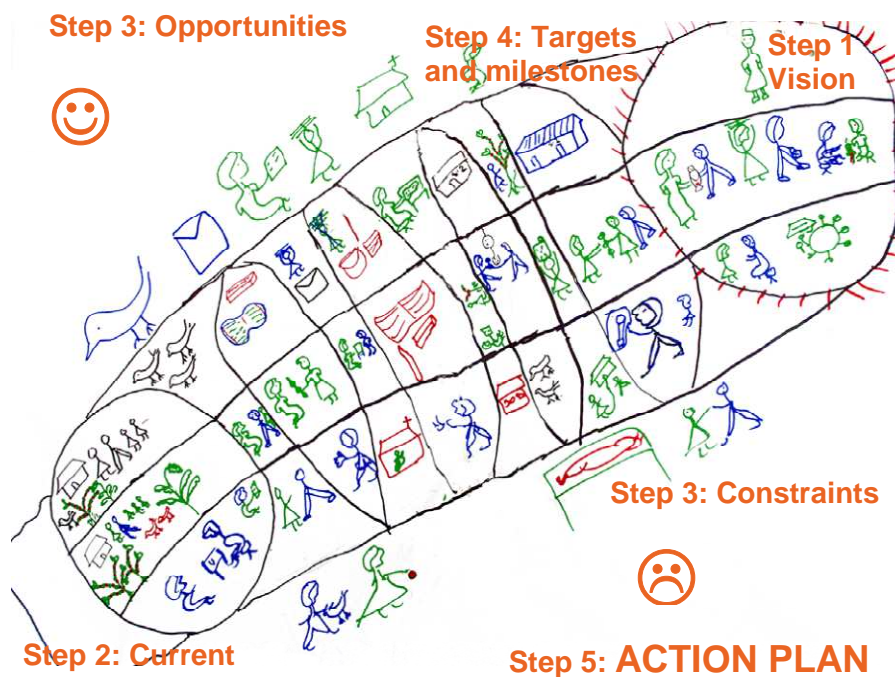
The Gender Action Learning System (GALS) is a community-led empowerment methodology that is used for:

- Individual life and livelihood planning;
- Collective action and gender advocacy for change;
- Institutional awareness raising and changing power relationship with service providers, private sector stakeholders and government bodies.

GALS was developed under Oxfam Novib's WEMAN programme with Linda Mayoux and local partner civil society partners in Uganda, Sudan, Peru and India. It consists of:

- A set of principles related to gender justice, participation and leadership;
- A series of visual diagramming tools that are used for visioning, analysis, change planning and tracking by individuals, households, stakeholder groups or in multi-stakeholder settings
- Peer learning mechanisms and structures for ongoing action learning in communities
- Mechanisms to sustainably integrate GALS in organizations or interventions such as financial services, business development services and agricultural extension





GALS is designed as a complementary methodology for economic development interventions. The starting point of GALS is: i) Developing gender action learning skills of vulnerable stakeholder groups in the value chain, to enable them to identify and implement sustainable strategies to increase incomes, resources, economic choices and negotiation power. ii) Engaging skills,

energies and resources of the private sector and institutional stakeholders in the value chain to change power and gender relations, through the negotiation of win-win strategies.

It starts with creating community ownership and action priorities for gender justice during events with community members and the staff of organisations. **Step 1** assists participants to develop individual and then household pictorial visions, before diagnosing their current situation (**step 2**). In order to promote a sense of achievement and cause-effect linkages, the participants reflect where they began. In **step 3**, participants identify the opportunities and constraints that will affect the realization of their vision. **Step 4** focuses upon enabling participants to identify their targets and milestones, and finally, **step 5** asks participants to set activities on the road towards the achievement of their overall vision.

The methodology then takes participants through four stages, all of which are participatory and depend on the use of visual, rather than written, material. This makes it ideal for inclusive and effective joint analysis and planning by non-literate with literate participants.

- Stage 1: Preliminary value chain mapping of gender issues and power relations.
- Stage 2: Action learning with vulnerable groups to identify the poverty and gender issues at each level, implement immediate change strategies, strengthen collaboration and peer sharing.
- Stage 3: The identification, planning and negotiation of multi-stakeholder win-win strategies. At this stage the more powerful stakeholders are involved.
- Stage 4: The promotion of sustainable action learning process including peer up-scaling, policy advocacy, and ongoing change planning in existing platforms.

GALS has proved its effectiveness for creating win-win collaboration between marginalized communities and businesses, service providers, government agencies and traditional authorities, and changing gender relations including property rights, decision making and violence. It has been piloted and/or implemented in more than 11 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Within its WEMAN programme, Oxfam Novib seeks to further innovate and scale up the use of GALS in different contexts, value chains and with private sector and government agencies at different levels.

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