

*Institutionalizing Gender-responsive Research & Development in
Agriculture and Natural Resource Management through
Women's Networks*

FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT

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Submitted by

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(WOCAN)**

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I: Synthesis

There is an increasing demand on agricultural and NRM research and development institutions to address the needs of those constituents who are highly vulnerable to the effects of poverty, land degradation and climate change. Perhaps, nowhere is this more significant and urgent as in mountain areas, where the vulnerability of marginalized groups such as poor women and indigenous minorities requires that research and development systems focus attention on the underlying causes of their marginalization.

One significant causal factor contributing to marginalization of such groups is the ineffectiveness of R&D systems to address the demands and needs of their constituency groups, particularly of female small holders. Often, such systems are constrained by a limited capacity to conduct gender-sensitive research and the predominance of a 'supply-driven' agenda of innovation that cannot effectively respond to the complex social and environmental realities of such vulnerable groups.

This major aim of this project was to strengthen the capacities of women agricultural and NRM professionals and rural women's groups to themselves control the process of research, while simultaneously building their capacities and power to demand agricultural and NRM development in their own terms; an approach that meets both the practical and strategic needs of poor rural women for empowerment and poverty alleviating technologies. A key component of this approach is the transformation of the institutions and organizations that address food security and their involvement of end users in the process of innovation. Strengthening the capacities of both rural and professional women's networks to do this is an investment in social capital that complements other forms of capita – natural, physical, human and financial (Dasgupta and Serageldin 2000).

The project aimed to undertake action research through change agents - selected from partner organizations - who diagnosed and designed specific action research approaches using a framework that enabled one to view an organization as being composed of three systems: technical, political, and cultural. Used as an analytical tool, this framework enabled the assessment of opportunities and constraints to mainstreaming social analysis/gender analysis (SA/GA) approaches in the organization.

The principal findings of the action research can be characterized as follows. There was a general absence of technical expertise to conduct gender-sensitive approaches, no specific policies nor internal fund allocation for gender. On the other hand, the management staff of most organizations agreed that gender was a critical and important component that needed to be integrated into organizational practice; the majority of the partner organizations did indeed have gender components within certain projects. However, they did not possess the technical capacity to integrate 'best practices' from these projects into the organizational context.

However, as a result of the project, there has been a significant increase in the capacities of partner organizations to integrate gender-sensitive approaches within the various stages of the

project cycle, as well as in the structures of the organization. There has also been an increase in the individual capacity of the change agents, and in cases where they have moved onto other organizations, they have continued to be part of the network, while continually seeking to affect transformations in their new organizational settings.

Considerable achievements have been made in terms of the individual capacities of the change agents. Several of them (Sikkim, Meghalaya, Nepal and Laos) have already been functioning as ‘trainers’ with other organizations than their own. These participants will function as trainers in an upcoming project supported by CARE/Nepal, to build capacity for gender and organizational change among forestry organizations in Nepal.

It is important however to continue building on existing capacity of change agents. As members of WOCAN, these change agents will be continually exposed to future opportunities to train others as well as to enhance their own learning processes.

Several lessons have also been generated from the implementation of the project. These ‘best practices’ have been summarized in a video production of the approach adopted by WOCAN and refined during this project. This video is being shown at the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development meetings in May, 2008 and is accessible through the WOCAN website. As well, this approach is being replicated in new initiatives in the Himalayan region as well as in Africa through partnerships with CARE/Nepal, Heifer International and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in several countries of Sub Saharan Africa and South Asia.

II: Research problem

Mountain people of the eastern Himalayas and Laos rank among the most deprived of the world’s population, and yet their stewardship of mountain natural resources is closely linked to the sustainability of life in the lowland areas. Mountain women play a crucial, and in many cases, dominant role in natural resource management, agricultural production and the well – being and survival of mountain families and communities. Recent work completed by the PRGA/IDRC SA/GA researchers has added to the knowledge available, yet to date relatively little information exists on the status of mountain women and gender relations in this region. Gender disaggregated data is scanty, due in part to the lack of SA/GA expertise within research and training institutions in the region. Policies and projects have therefore been designed without an understanding of gender relations, proving inappropriate for the local mountain context by ignoring the daily activities of women (Gurung, J., 1999).

Traditionally, most extension services have been devoted to farmers who own land and who are able to obtain credit and invest it in inputs and technological innovations. Since women often lack access to land or other collateral, extension services bypass women. This marginalizes the role of women in agricultural production systems by emphasizing high-yielding crop varieties to which women have little access. This also undermines the traditional knowledge women possess about agriculture and resource management. There is increasing demand on agricultural and NRM research and development to address the needs of those constituents who are highly vulnerable to the effects of poverty, land degradation and climate change. The vulnerability of

marginalized groups such as poor women and indigenous minorities also demands that research and development systems focus their attention on the unequal social relations that may exist and subsequently, impact on, and many a times, compound the vulnerability of such groups, particularly women.

However, much of the effectiveness of R & D systems to address the needs and demands of their constituency groups, particularly of female small holders, is critically constrained by a limited capacity to conduct gender-sensitive research and the predominance of a 'supply-driven' agenda of innovation that cannot effectively respond to the complex social and environmental realities of such vulnerable groups¹.

Researchers have noted that institutions responsible for agriculture and natural resource management are characteristically 'gender blind' throughout most of the developing world (e.g. Gurung, J., 2002; Tinker, 1997). In countries of South Asia, this is especially true, due to culturally prevalent gendered norms and values that discourage women from pursuing careers in these male dominated sectors, and maintain gender biases and stereotypes that blind male and female professionals from seeing gender-related aspects of land use. This persists, despite the increasing documentation about the pivotal roles that women play in agriculture, as laborers, holders of knowledge, decision makers, and food processors in these areas of the world.

Women are doubly affected by this 'logjam' of disadvantages due to gender discrimination, and so merit special attention. Gaps between male and female access to assets, education, and influence within decision making institutions are inefficient obstacles to rural growth and human development (IFAD, 2001). And yet, there are very few existing training programs that focus on training and capacity building for SA/GA in applied research in agriculture and NRM.

III: Research findings

Research Findings and dissemination

In July 2006, a workshop was conducted to review the progress of research being conducted by the participants and to develop appropriate plans of action based on their initial findings.

Methodology Adopted:

The research findings were based on a common organizational framework (see annex), which looked at the following three major areas of an organization:

The Technical dimension, which consist of policy, tasks and responsibilities, and expertise

The Political Dimension, which consist of factors that influence policy, decision making processes, and room to innovate within the organization.

¹ One of the key lessons that emerge from impact case studies conducted globally by the PRGA Program is that involving stakeholders (such as women) in the early stages of the research process leads to better targeting, greater sense of ownership, and higher impact (PRGA Annual Report. 2003).

The Cultural Dimension, which consists of the symbols, values and norms, and attitudes within an organization.

Research Findings

Technical Dimension

In terms of the Technical Dimensions of the organizations, there was general consensus that although national level policies for gender are present, their respective organizations did not have a specific gender policy per se. (Since then, the Department of Horticulture in Sikkim and the Ministry of Agriculture in Nepal, have adopted specific gender policies). Despite the absence of organizational level gender policies, the research findings demonstrate that national level policies provide an important, enabling environment for the change agents to pursue policy adoption at the level of their organization.

With the exception of Nepal, all the other participating organizations demonstrated low levels of expertise in gender. In Bhutan and Laos, most of the gender expertise resides in the national women's organizations, but, it was emphasized that expertise in training for gender in agriculture was non-existent. As a result, the departments of agriculture had to seek expertise from other sources, for which there were very limited funds available to them. In Meghalaya, both the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the Department of Agriculture had "women's cells" within their respective organizations, but their functions were primarily targeted towards equity issues in the work place, rather than programmatic.

By contrast, there was considerable expertise and awareness of gender issues in Nepal. In the Ministry of Agriculture, there was a gender division that is closely related to the extension services. Additionally, there were several senior and mid level men and women who had been trained in gender analysis (two had completed Master-level degrees in gender) and were applying their expertise within their projects. The Gender Working Group (which is separate from the Gender Division) is comprised of high level women and is supported by senior management. It has been in existence for a number of years.

Perhaps the most significant challenge stated by all the participants' research findings was the absence of specific internal funding for gender activities. Activities and projects with a gender focus were limited to 'projects' that had been specifically funded by external interests. (It should be emphasized that in the case of Nepal, the Director General has committed internal funds as a result of the action plan developed by the Gender Working Group)

Political Dimension

The majority of senior level respondents that were interviewed for the research were of the view that gender policies in their governments were driven largely by donor interests. Higher level leaders within the organizations (ICAR in Meghalaya and Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Organization in Laos most particularly) felt that their programming was generally 'gender-

sensitive’ and that there was no real need for specific gender policies at the level of the organization.

At the level of the project, the majority of the respondents (mid level professionals) in all the participating organizations were of the opinion that they had sufficient ‘space’ to innovate within their organizations. Examples cited of this were their ability to conduct gender-sensitive research on their own without explicit ‘permission’ of their division chiefs. However, they also expressed concern that there were no incentives, nor accountability mechanisms to ensure the quality of gender analysis being conducted. Moreover, the absence of specific terms of references (TORs) in most cases worked as a disincentive, since their involvement in such work was viewed as an additional burden, outside the purview of their assigned responsibilities.

Cultural Dimension

In terms of the organizational culture (s), there were mixed reviews. The attitudes of the leadership in the majority of participating organizations towards gender issues did not go beyond rhetorical support. There was a gap between the verbal assurances of support for gender and reluctance to assume any new gender-sensitive approaches to programming unless there were specific policies or other directives from higher authorities within the ministry or other national bodies. This virtually assures that gender issues will be relegated to project-level activities supported by external funding sources, rather than becoming a core part of the organization’s practice.

However, there has been considerable change in the attitudes and levels of confidence, particularly among the change agents themselves, and within the in-house groups that they have established. They have attributed their changed attitudes to increased competence and skills in the application of gender issues as well as their ability to conceptualize the ‘bigger’ context in which processes of change occur. Below is a sample of comments generated from one change agent on the progress of her partner from the selected organization:

How the Project has influenced us (by Darilyn Syiem)

Besides what I have said earlier I also want to strongly emphasize that each of us, that is, Wachwa, Rajesh and myself, have undergone some changes as a result of the project. Firstly we never missed any of the trainings and put our heart and soul into the activities, connecting with each other, cross-checking to ensure that the programme went off well. Yes! In the beginning the partners and their teams took things lightly like arriving late for the workshop and wanting to leave early. But as the project progressed these faults were self-corrected and the value of time acknowledged, I think. I observed that Wachwa initially donned the usual government approach which restricted her space for change and flexibility. But she gradually shed this away and I think that the frequent rubbing of shoulders with me and the rest of the NEN team was largely responsible for this. The existing gap between the DAO and the Directorate did not make things easy and it was very disheartening for Wachwa and me when official letters/documents remain pending simply because the dealing assistant remained absent indefinitely. But Wachwa was never daunted by this and as she said she never minded carrying moving the files herself in order to speed up things.

Secondly, we acquired influencing skills and our confidence was boosted. I am particularly amazed by the change in Wachwa – she was so quiet and hesitant to approach higher ups but everyone involved in the project will admit, I am sure, that by the end of the project, Wachwa has become vocal and confident. This was clearly evident during the final workshop in Kathmandu when she demonstrated her newly acquired facilitation skills during a learning exercise. Rajesh too never hesitated to call me not only for work but even to just say ‘hello’; he eagerly attended the Women’s International Day event hosted by NEN in 2007. All in all he has developed an attachment to the gender issue which has been manifested in his head, hand, and heart. Once when we were travelling together to Wachwa’s district office he suddenly remarked: “*I just saw a woman farmer sitting beside the fields looking up at the sky. I think she is hoping for the rains; she looks worried*”. After this I have often thought of him as a *gender sensitive scientist*.

As to myself, I have been further strengthened as an individual and as a proponent for gender equality. I was first slightly intimidated of working with scientists and the state bureaucracy but these apprehensions are now history and I am presently working in partnership with the State Police and the Health Department on a project to counter violence against women.

In conclusion I have to say that we do not expect plain sailing from here onwards and in fact there is still a strong resistance which has not been actually spelt out but which I could sense. In spite of the positive responses from both ICAR and the Agriculture Department, I feel that when we eventually come down to policy matters like allocation of separate funds for gender mainstreaming, appointment of gender experts and so on it would be very tough to get state consensus. This would have to be decided at the level of the central government in Delhi which again would depend on pressure from state governments and advocacy work of the women's movement in India. But small doors are opening through channels like the extension reforms where central government has ensured that 30% of the funds are to be utilized for work with women farmers. As Wachwa said, funds from this scheme could be strategically tapped for the gender core team work and the follow up activities would speak for themselves. Only time and continued hand holding with international partners, particularly WOCAN, will be able to tell the future stories.

IV: Fulfillment of objectives

Objective 1: Build capacities of rural women to meet their needs for food security and income generating opportunities through local organization and agro-enterprise development

Activities

1. Workshop on Rapid Market Appraisal Cycle (October 2006)

A Rapid Market Appraisal (RMA) cycle training workshop was conducted in Meghalaya in October 2006 for members of the project and their partners by an international consultant. A total of 14 participants attended the workshop for 5 days.

The objective of the workshop was to enable participants to better understand how to apply concepts and skills of agro-enterprise development through a 'hands-on' process as well as to be able to train others, both within their respective organizations and grassroots partner organizations.

The content of the training workshop included: (see annex)

- Introduction to Rapid Market Appraisal (RMA Cycle)
- RMA analyses through field practice
- Introduction to a framework of Action and Intervention
- How to Design Interventions

The majority of participants who attended this workshop felt that the content was extremely appropriate and 'timely', particular in the context of their own organizations' emphasis on searching for new and innovative avenues for income generation for rural women.

2. Enhancing rural women's access to markets (May 2007)

A capacity development workshop for rural women conducted jointly by the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the North East Network (NEN) in Meghalaya. The workshop was aimed at enhancing and improving the skills of rural women to more effectively engage with

markets. A total of 30 women participated in the workshop that was conducted on the ICAR campus in Meghalaya in May 2007.

3. Leadership and rural women (May 2007)

In May 2007, a 'Women's Leadership Training Course' was organized in Sikkim by the Eastern Himalayan Initiative (EHI). Nineteen women farmers from Sikkim and Kalimpong attended the 5 day workshop which was facilitated by a leadership trainer from Nepal. The objectives of the leadership workshop were:

- To enhance rural women's engagement with markets
- Enhance the organizational capacity of rural women through their leadership potential

The expected outcomes of the workshop were:

- Improved communication and facilitation skills
- Enhanced capacity for collective action and networking
- Development of an action plan for improved engagement with markets

4. Leadership training Meghalaya May 2007

The North East Network, a principal partner in the project, conducted a leadership training course for 12 members of the gender working group from the Directorate of Agriculture for Meghalaya. The training was a critical element in the capacity building process of local partners and targeted at a conceived gap in the capacity of agricultural extensionists who work closely with farmers, particularly rural women's groups.

Some of the core objectives of the training workshop were:

- To enhance teamwork
- To enhance cooperation and learning
- To examine existing attitudes and values regarding gender and how they affect their work
- To encourage innovations in work practice

Outcomes:

Some of the major outcomes can be summarized as follows:

- The women participants in Sikkim expressed confidence that they could affect change and improve the community and their livelihoods, through systematic planning and development of off-season vegetable production on their own
- This group also developed an organizational plan of action for direct linkages with a state service provider (*Uttar Bang Krishi Visavidhalaya*), to access trainings on various agricultural services
- The Gender Working Group from the Ministry of Agriculture in Sikkim has integrated plans to work with these trained rural women in their own action plans, for which they are seeking special funds from the ministry.

Objective 2: To support partners in agricultural and NRM organizations to institutionalize a planning and delivery process that is more responsive to the needs of rural women through facilitating organizational change

Activities

1. Site monitoring and mentoring visits (February 2007)

In February, site visits were conducted in Nepal, Sikkim and Meghalaya by the PRGA Coordinator. During these visits, the Coordinator met with the Gender Working groups in the departments of agriculture, and also with the heads of the departments to seek continued support in the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Plans of Action that are being implemented in each organization. During this visit, a 'sensitization' workshop was also held in each organization for senior members of the organization, with a view to generate awareness and long term support for gender mainstreaming.

2. Workshops on Action planning for gender mainstreaming (June/July 2007)

Beginning in mid-June and ending in early July, three workshops were conducted on-site in Meghalaya, Sikkim, and Nepal (see Annex 2 for sample of workshop content). The objectives of the three workshops were:

- To assess and evaluate the Gender Mainstreaming Plans of Action
- Modify existing activities according to lessons generated
- Seek funding support from respective organizations to continue the activities

The workshops were conducted over a period of 3 days in each site. Participants included members of the Gender Working Groups established in each organization, and all the division chiefs/heads and the deputy and director generals of the agricultural departments.

Outcomes:

Some of the major outcomes can be summarized as follows:

- Financial support from the Director General for activities of the working group in the Department of Agriculture in Nepal. Moreover, in the present political context of Nepal, both the members and leadership of the Department of Agriculture were of the view that such a plan of action was consistent with the national policy of Social Inclusion.
- Legal sanction by the Ministry of Legal Affairs for the establishment of the Gender Working Group in the Department of Agriculture in Sikkim. This is particularly significant as this sets a legal precedent for the establishment of such groups in other departments and ministries in the State of Sikkim
- The recognition and acknowledgement that the Gender Mainstreaming Plan of Action for the Department of Agriculture in Meghalaya is consistent with the overall Indian Government policy of gender mainstreaming in Agriculture. The Director General of the Department and the Commissioner, the highest civil service member in the State of Meghalaya, were supportive of the Plan of Action for Mainstreaming and felt that it was

extremely strategic for the purpose of generating additional funds from the Central government.

Objective 3: to generate a viable set of 'good practices' for mainstreaming PR and GA approaches through Action Research and assessing impacts of methods for learning and change

Activities:

1. *participation of WOCAN Director and Coordinator of WOCAN Nepal in IDRC's Cross-Learning Workshop for the Umbrella Program on Social and Gender Analysis at the Asian Institute of Technology in January, 2007*

The WOCAN Director gave a presentation on the progress and learning of the Eastern Himalayan project to date. The main take-away messages focused on the following areas: (1) crucial role of women's leadership in driving organizational change; (2) importance of innovation in four areas of organizational change – political commitment, technical capacity, accountability and organizational culture; (3) identification and building capacities of change agents is an effective approach; (4) the insider-outsider cooperation model works. Questions from the participants dealt mostly with how the group sees the management of organizational change through shifts in differing levels of power relations, the role of brokers, and the necessary triggers for change. Many of the participants suggested capacity-building for partner organizations and other identified change agents on social and policy analysis as necessary to drive and sustain organizational change; follow-up support to change agents after the leadership trainings; further work on getting men's involvement in these changes, especially when women's leadership is present; and use of tools other than SWOT for organizational development interventions. Lastly, women's role at every organizational level must be fully appraised to get them to be part of the change process.

Suggestions for networking and sharing included: a colloquium for sharing research products of SAGA; SAGA members joining WOCAN; sharing of a trainer on organizational change from the Himalayan project to China; WOCAN learns more about Winrock's women leadership program from Chinese team; the WOCAN/AIT/Chinese team discusses and develops ideas for a regional women's leadership course and TOT; and the preparation of visual materials to showcase best practices, led by the Eastern Himalayan and Chinese teams. Participants suggested establishing a forum to share publications, materials and researches and where members are informed about the updates and can use as message board and as a moderated forum to help networks and to bring experts and different ideas together, which can be shared and taken forward. Issues for advocacy can be prioritized through collective action.

Of these suggested actions, WOCAN and AIT have initiated the process of building a women's leadership course to be held at AIT and several participants have joined WOCAN as members.

Training of Trainers workshop (January 2008)

A Training of Trainers workshop was conducted for participants in January 2008 in Nepal. From the inception of the Project, many participants had identified the need to hold a workshop where they could enhance or develop their facilitation and communication skills, since they were

integral to influencing change. This 3 day workshop, facilitated by a professional team of communications experts from COMAT/Nepal, focused on leadership, communication and facilitation skills for influencing change, while also revisiting themes on organizational development.

Production of Video to Document Best Practices

During the last six months of this project, a professional video production team from Nepal and India produced a video of the approach followed by this project, in order to visually share the best practices and learning widely throughout the development community. In particular, this video was produced for WOCAN to show at the United Nation Commission for Sustainable Development 15, which focused on the themes of Agriculture, Drought and Desertification, Rural Development and Africa. The video was shown to an international audience at a side event during the High Level Segment of this session.

Continuation with CARE/Nepal, Heifer International, IFAD (August 2008)

Based on the success of this project, CARE/Nepal indicated their interest to conduct a similar capacity development process with their partner organizations that include the Department of Forests and several Civil Society organizations that work in forest development. This 2 year Project will focus on building capacities of these organizations to integrate gender-sensitive approaches within their programs and structures by instituting a learning and change process. Many of the participants of the earlier IDRC-supported Project will be used as trainers in the CARE/Nepal and WOCAN Project.

Outcomes

- Scaling-out of the approach on gender and organizational change and women's leadership with advocates of gender and NRM at the UN Commission for Sustainable Development meetings and ECOSOC meetings. The video is being widely distributed.
- Building capacity and exposure of selected members of the group to train others, particularly those participants of the CARE/Nepal and IFAD-sponsored workshops. Participants include members for India and Nepal.

VI: Project design and implementation

The following are the set of activities that were designed and implemented between: 2004-2008.

Activity 1. Conducted a stakeholder meeting at the initiation of the Project in October 2004. The purpose was to bring together 2 change agents from each of the 5 partner organizations to collaborate on the following:

- Development of criteria for identifying national partner organizations
- Design selection criteria and lead a process of identification of partners, including women's groups

- Review PRGA Program, WOCAN and partner performance, institutionalization case studies, and cross-cutting impact assessment, and advise on project direction
- Establish a set of criteria for determining ‘best practices’ generated by the Project

Activity 2. Developed a training curriculum in November 2004. The curriculum was based on the ‘Institutionalization Framework’ for organizational analysis and action planning and it was refined and adapted according to lessons learned and the emerging needs of the participating organizations (see annex)

Activity 3. Formed a group consisting of at least two organizational change agents from 5 partner organizations. October 2004-February 2005. The core group of change agents was participants of the earlier IDRC-supported project that concluded in 2003. These participants in turn selected additional partners from 5 organizations in the region for this project.

Activity 4. Conducted Organizational Change Workshops for training, analysis of progress with application of the *Institutionalization Framework*, and the exchange of good organizational change practices. These workshops were conducted were comprised of 3 levels:

Level 1 capacity building workshop conducted in February 2005 for

- improving skills for PR and SA/GA approaches
- introducing organizational concepts and skills
- introducing the organizational analysis framework.

This was followed by a *Level 2* workshop in August 2005 of the same participants and focusing on:

- organizational assessment and analysis
- identification of opportunities and constraints for institutionalizing PR and SA/GA approaches (including criteria development for M&E)
- Development of an action plan for institutionalization.

Level 3 Training of Trainers workshop was conducted in Year 3(January 2008):

- based on their commitment and facilitation skills, change agent were selected to train others in PR and SA/GA approaches and organizational change in order to ensure the sustainability of the institutionalization process.

Activity 5.Supported in-house working groups or committees on Institutionalization of PR and SA/GA approaches between 2005-2007. Partner organizations were encouraged to form working groups to collaborate in mainstreaming gender-sensitive approaches in project planning and implementation within their organizations. The PRGA Coordinator and WOCAN Director travelled extensively within the region to each organization and assisted in the following ways:

- Conducted joint consultations with management to seek support for the initiative
- conducted joint awareness building seminars,
- collaborated on the preparation of tools and methodologies for undertaking research,
- collaborated on the analysis of problems and crafted potential solutions,
- and provided financial resources to support action research for institutionalization of PR and SA/GA approaches.

Activity 6: Implementation of Action Plans 2005-continuation

Throughout this project, change agents have been implementing the action plans, monitoring progress on their plans using the skills and strategies acquired in their workshops, and exchanging experiences through the moderated list serves. Action plans are flexible and dynamic, consisting of; an opportunities and constraints analysis, a set of objectives, procedures and strategies for instituting change (e.g. plans for building alliances and acquiring terms of reference from management to support the work of the core team), and a description of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and indicators.

These Action Plans were supported by small grants of \$6000 to each partner organization, to enable change agents to implement activities efficiently and effectively, without needing to obtain permission of higher authorities who might claim that budgetary support was not available.

Activity 7. Organized an end-of-project workshop in January 2008. This workshop was organized for all the participants who prepared and presented the results of their work. Although the original intention of the Project Coordinators was to invite most of the senior level managers from each participating organization to attend this workshop to learn and share experience, while also creating support from senior management, there were insufficient funds to bring them all together.

During this workshop, participants shared their lessons and plans for continuation. They also recommended future strategies for networking within the region. One potential outcome of this project is to draw on the expertise of this group to train others in the region. WOCAN has initiated discussions with CARE/Nepal to build capacity of the several of their partner organizations in the forestry sector, and several members of the existing network will become regional trainers for this initiative.

Activity 8. Provided training workshops to women's groups on agro-enterprise development 2007.

A scientist from the CGIAR, in collaboration with local consultants developed and implemented 2 training workshops for on value chain analysis for participating organizational members and their own rural partners (women's groups)

Activity 9. Provided training on leadership, community organization and facilitation skills 2007.

Local trainers were recruited to provide these sets of skills for rural women's groups that are partnering with the project's partner organizations.

Activity 10. Provided opportunities for cross visits to other women's groups working in similar ways, and to agriculture and NRM research and extension organizations to meet professionals and gain information about resources available to them. Unfortunately, cross-visits of women's groups were only conducted in Sikkim since this set of activities was planned on the assumption that additional funds would be available from other donors. The objective behind this intended activity was largely unmet.

Participation of research users in identifying project idea, project design and implementation, utilization: Building on past experiences

This project built on the lessons and achievements of a previous IDRC-supported project "Building Capacity for Social and Gender Analysis in Natural Resource Management and Biodiversity", completed in 2004. The project addressed the need for capacity building in the Eastern Himalayan region by providing training on gender and social analysis methods and approaches in order to understand differential impacts of resource degradation and natural resource management practices in different segments of the population, with an aim towards developing transformative and innovative solutions. It

supported the integration and practical application of SA/GA in 13 organizations in Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, and Nepal through an iterative training process with 15 female and male researchers from these organizations. The project's objectives were to develop culturally appropriate approaches and tools for SAGA in NRM, document progress and practices, and build capacity within organizations to mainstream gender in project activities

One of the recommendations by participants of this project was that although considerable progress was made with integrating issues of social/gender equity into applied research, the goal now is to strengthen their own and their organisation's capacities to institutionalise this approach, as well generate stronger research results in the current projects. They agreed that through strengthening partners' organizational SA/GA capacities has not been addressed in any systematic way in the program to date, this should be the focus of a further project, as it remains an important issue and major (research) challenge.

A further need identified in this project was a focus on enhanced women's participation in the research process itself, by strengthening their capacity to organise, both at the rural and organisational levels. A stronger focus on poverty alleviation was advised, by building a model to strengthen women's capacities to organise around agriculture and NRM to improve their livelihoods and status through initiatives to empower local women's groups and transform related organisations to respond to their needs.

VII: Project outputs and dissemination

Output 1: A cadre of experienced change agents forms a learning community to implement and manage organizational change for institutionalizing PR and SA/GA approaches in agriculture and NRM organizations in seven countries

A cadre of 12 change agents (8 women and 4 men) is active in the following organizations: Department of Agriculture, Nepal; Department of Horticulture, Sikkim; the Department of Agriculture, Meghalaya; the Indian Council for Agricultural Research in Meghalaya; the Department of Forestry in Phongsaly Province, Laos; the Department of Agriculture, Bhutan.

One unanticipated consequence has been the turnover of change agents in two cases, when they moved to new organizations (Laos) or to another department within the same ministry (Bhutan). In both cases however, the change agents have continued to maintain and sustain change strategies in their 'new' organizational settings. The impacts have yet to be analyzed.

Some members of the network of change agents (Sikkim, Meghalaya and Nepal) will be acting as 'trainers' in a new Project that is being conducted by WOCAN, with the support of IFAD and CARE/Nepal. Acting as co-trainers in gender and organizational change, women's leadership, and men-supporting women's leadership for change, these change agents will be called upon to share their own experiences in gender mainstreaming, as well as provide on-site technical support to 5 partner organizations of CARE/Nepal, and 2 of IFAD. This Project is anticipated to begin in August 2008 for a period of 2 years.

Output 2: Partner organizations have a tested framework and set of documented practices that are applied for institutionalization of PR and SA/GA approaches

The Gender Mainstreaming framework that was tested and adopted by partner organizations merges two major theoretical models: the Gender Integration Framework, which guides organizations in "how"

to mainstream gender throughout their operations and programs; and the Gender Equality Wheel, which tracks the impact of gender mainstreaming in communities.

1. The Gender Integration Framework

At the root of the process is **Political Commitment** which becomes evident when top- level leadership actively supports gender integration, commits staff time and resources, and institutes needed policies and procedures. The other three dimensions grow out of this demonstration of political commitment

Technical Capacity entails changing organizational procedures, as well as building individual skills. Individuals can take their skills with them when they leave the organization but new procedures and systems become basic to how an organization operates

Accountability involves “carrots” and “sticks” for encouraging and reinforcing new behaviors and practices; it ultimately requires building responsibility for gender integration into job descriptions, work plans, and performance assessments.

Organizational Culture deals with the informal norms and embedded attitudes of an organization. To be successful, any gender mainstreaming strategy must take into account all four of these dimensions.

This framework enables an organization to systematically analyze and address the status of gender equality in all aspects of the operations and programs of the organization. It identifies areas of strength and achievement, innovative policies and practices, and continuing challenges as a foundation for gender action planning.

The Gender Assessment covers the organization itself and its programs. It includes three steps:

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Step three: action planning. In this step, an organization’s senior management team or a ‘gender task force’ analyzes the outcomes of the questionnaire and the focus groups. Using the 4-part Gender Mainstreaming Framework, they develop a gender action plan, geared to the specific strengths, weaknesses, and circumstances of that particular organization/program.

2. The Gender Equality Wheel

The **Gender Equality Wheel** is a tool which provides a framework to categorize the outcomes and impact of gender mainstreaming on the women, men, families, and communities for a diverse range of R&D projects.

It tracks women’s transition from alienation and isolation to ultimate involvement in community activities and strategic participation in social, economic, cultural, and political transformation –

and significantly, men's recognition, support, and involvement in this process. The Gender Equality Wheel identifies four stages of the progress towards gender equality:

The Four Stages

- **Engagement** of women to come out of isolation. It represents the stage at which people (especially women) come out of isolation, discover new possibilities for their lives, and begin to build mutual support.
- **Empowerment** with ideas, knowledge, skills and resources. It builds the self-confidence in women and men that comes with new knowledge, ideas, skills, and resources as they explore new ways of seeing and acting.
- **Enhancement** of lives in households and communities. This refers to the application of new ideas, knowledge and skills to enhance lives of family and community members and provide household and community gains
- **Emergence** into the public sphere. It moves women and men onto the public stage to social and political action that transforms their social, cultural, and political environment

Output 3: A constituency of clients able to articulate demand for use of PR and SA/GA approaches to benefit the poor has made research more accountable and relevant to poor women.

There has been extensive support from senior management and political leadership (that exceeded expectations) for enabling the organizations to become demand oriented. The Director General of Nepal's Department of Agriculture committed to the establishment of explicit policy and structural changes to ensure that the newly established gender working group becomes the body to ensure gender sensitivity in all program and Project implementations. Similarly, the gender working group in the Department of Horticulture in Sikkim has received legal sanction from the Ministry of Legal Affairs, thereby setting an important precedent for other departments, and also legitimizing their own activities to ensure that departmental programs adhere to gender-sensitive participatory indicators. In Meghalaya, one member of the rural women's group has officially been included in the State's 5-Year planning process, which eventually contributes to the National Planning procedure for the 5-year plans.

While these positive developments demonstrate important milestones in organizations moving towards demand driven processes, there are existing challenges for them to be sustained over a longer period of time. For one, it would be useful for leadership in all these organizations to be networked and supported through sustained awareness and capacity development opportunities. Secondly, a systematic articulation of existing challenges and good practices through meetings, publications, and other communication media would considerably enhance the sustainability of present achievements. Third, most organizations are driven by policy directives and funding procedures that are centrally determined, thus allowing them little room to maneuver in terms of introducing and sustaining innovative approaches. Finally, in most cases, the leadership of the various organizations was most 'willing' to participate in transforming their organizations when 'directed' from central authorities. This was especially the case in India.

Output 4: A network of women’s research and development committees is able to direct agriculture and NRM research and development activities to address their needs for food security and income generation.

Several capacity development activities were conducted with women’s groups in Nepal, Sikkim and Meghalaya. Several training workshops were conducted on Women and men’s leadership, community organization, and value chain analysis. Moreover, there is sufficient capacity among partners (change agents) to provide such trainings to rural women’s groups on a sustained basis over the years.

While these initial initiatives have been a good beginning, there is much to be done before the rural women’s groups can effectively organize themselves to make demands on agriculture and NRM R&D services. It is anticipated that the change agents from the service providing institutions will continue to play a meaningful role in ‘brokering’ such a process. Clearly, a longer term perspective is needed and it would be useful to assess the impacts that these change agents have on enabling a demand-driven process in the next several years.

However, the project has strengthened WOCAN as a network in the region and many women and men professionals have become active members.

Output 5: A model for impact assessment of organizational learning and change processes using PR and SA/GA approaches is developed and implemented.

The framework for assessing impact is based on the 9-box organizational model outlined below. It is used both as a tool for assessing impact and a tool for action planning. Impact is assessed according to criteria and questions in each box of the framework (see annex for details)

Policy	Tasks & Responsibilities	Expertise
Policy Influence	Decision-making	Room to Innovate
Norms and Values	Co-operation & Learning	Attitudes

This framework was used for an initial assessment of the organization, which then became the basis for action planning.

Output 6: Capacity is increased among staff of partner organizations, particularly for women professional staff, to use PR and SA/GA approaches to effectively address the needs of rural poor women.

See below for a full description on capacity development

Institutional reinforcement

All the participating institutions have adopted an action plan for gender mainstreaming. These action plans were developed through a process that involved strategically selected organizational members such as senior management, supportive allies within the organization, and interested members. The first step involved an institutional analysis conducted by the change agents

themselves, followed by an organization-wide process of dissemination, usually in the form of a workshop where the findings were presented and discussed. A second step was the action planning that was conducted with the support and presence of senior management and other staff, and facilitated by PRGA and WOCAN members. This process of involving senior leadership and other internal members was to generate 'ownership' and hence, ensure sustainability beyond the project duration.

In the case of Nepal, funds have been allocated internally for the gender working group. In Sikkim, a legal precedent has been established through the legal sanction granted by the Ministry of Legal Affairs for a gender working group to exist. In Meghalaya, funds and a legal framework for a gender working group is being explored with the highest civil service body within the state. All these are important and strategic developments to sustain the capacity development efforts of the project at the level of the institutions.

Increased skills of researchers involved

The major focus of the project was on capacity development for change agents in partner organizations. This was followed up with extensive on-site support visits and contacts with senior management in all the organizations, to generate support for the change agents as well as their action plans.

Considerable achievements have been made in terms of the individual capacities of the change agents. Several of them (Sikkim, Meghalaya, Nepal and Laos) have already been functioning as 'trainers' with other organizations than their own. These participants will function as trainers in an upcoming project supported by CARE/Nepal, to build capacity for gender and organizational change among forestry organizations in Nepal.

It is important however to continue building on existing capacity of change agents. As members of WOCAN, these change agents will be continually exposed to future opportunities to train others as well as to enhance their own learning processes.

Contribution to capacity of marginalized social groups

The action plans of the change agents involved a significant component dedicated to capacity development of rural women's groups that they partnered with. In Sikkim, 2 workshops were conducted on value chain analysis and women's leadership. In Meghalaya, several capacity development workshops were conducted and they include: gender analysis, agro-enterprise development; women's leadership; charcoal making and raising pigs in collaboration with the Indian Council for Agricultural Research, and health training. In Nepal and Laos, agro-enterprise training workshops were conducted with woman's group.

The remaining challenge in the capacity development of rural women's groups is for change agents to explore organizational mechanisms that would ensure appropriate capacity development initiatives became part of the organizational practice. Moreover, appropriate 'targeting' mechanisms would also have to be instituted to ensure that marginal members of the

community had access to such capacity development services. WOCAN is searching for ways to support the long term investment that is needed in the arena of capacity development.

VII: Project management

Administration by the research organization

The project was administered by the PRGA Program, and the technical management, in terms of workshop and small grants management was administered through WOCAN/Nepal. The partnership between PRGA and WOCAN was conceived from an earlier IDRC-supported project in the Eastern Himalayas in which the latter were extensively involved in capacity development of participants from the region. Moreover, WOCAN's presence in Nepal made it administratively possible to manage and oversee small grants disbursements to partners within the region, rather than having to manage it from CIAT Headquarters in Cali, Colombia.

WOCAN contributed significantly to the Project and substantial work was made possible through supplemental and flexible funds (USD 76,000). These funds allowed for the participation of additional partners from Laos (CARE/Laos and the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Organization/Laos), two additional capacity development workshops, site visits and the video production.

WOCAN also provided significant intellectual input in the development of the proposal, training, site visits and supervision, and administrative support and submission of regular technical and financial reports to the PRGA according to the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding that was developed prior to the initiation of the Project.

Scientific management of the project

The scientific management of the project was jointly administered by PRGA and WOCAN. The preparation and development of training modules, their implementation through workshops, and the follow-up site visits to each participating organization were jointly conducted by PRGA coordinator and WOCAN director. The gender mainstreaming framework (contained in the annex) was adapted and employed as a conceptual model for research, training and evaluation. During the development of action plans, IDRC's outcome mapping was employed extensively.

In addition to the PRGA coordinator and WOCAN director, other consultants also participated in the design and implementation of training courses. Additional expertise was sought in the following areas: agro-enterprise development; leadership; and training for trainers.

Technical and other support and administration by IDRC

During the initial proposal development phase, there was considerable support from Elizabeth Fajber, the senior program officer based in Delhi, India.

IX: Impact

The outcomes of the project have had extensive reach in the majority of partner organizations. In Sikkim, one significant outcome has been the legal sanction for the gender working group. In Meghalaya, a woman from the rural women's group has a permanent seat in the decision-making committee for the state's planning body; the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in Meghalaya, has adopted a manual outlining the criteria for gender in all the stages of research; Nepal's Department of Agriculture has adopted the gender working group as a legitimate body within the organization to monitor projects and all new proposals for gender inclusion. This is in line with the major political environment in Nepal, where social inclusion has been adopted as a major policy initiative in all ministries of the government. Finally, and perhaps one of the most significant outcomes, that has implications for future sustainability, is the existing capacity of change agents to function as trainers in gender analysis and mainstreaming, both at the community level as well as with their peers in the organization, or across the region. WOCAN, in its new initiative with CARE/Nepal and IFAD, intends to utilize this human resource extensively.

In terms of impact of the project, it is too early to make any assessment at this time. However, WOCAN plans to monitor developments within its partner organizations and conduct an impact assessment at the end of 2010. This is planned as a regional initiative to generate lessons and best practices for gender mainstreaming and organizational change in the eastern Himalayan region.

X: Overall assessment

IDRC, PRGA and WOCAN have invested considerable time and effort to the eastern Himalayan region, beginning in early 1998, and ending with this present project. All throughout, many of the partner organizations and individuals have been involved in one way or another in all these projects over this time period. The only new addition has been Laos, who were invited to participate from additional funds that WOCAN provided.

Some of the early participants have gone onto other careers as well as to further their academic pursuits. However, they have remained constant touch and have become part of the WOCAN network in the region. They have become an important resource in the region for a number of activities that range from training others to implementing new projects. Significantly, they continue to act as important change leaders in their organizations. Two participants from Laos and Bhutan have expressed their interest to initiate WOCAN chapters in their countries to replicate these activities amongst a wider group.

XI: Recommendations

The most significant contribution of IDRC in the region has been the long term support that they have provided for human resource development. We could strongly recommend that this support continue in some form or another in the future.

Annex 1

The Gender Mainstreaming Framework

The Gender Mainstreaming framework merges two major theoretical models: the Gender Integration Framework, which guides organizations in “how” to mainstream gender throughout their operations and programs; and the Gender Equality Wheel, which tracks the impact of gender mainstreaming in communities.

1. The Gender Integration Framework

At the root of the process is **Political Commitment** which becomes evident when top- level leadership actively supports gender integration, commits staff time and resources, and institutes needed policies and procedures. The other three dimensions grow out of this demonstration of political commitment

Technical Capacity entails changing organizational procedures, as well as building individual skills. Individuals can take their skills with them when they leave the organization but new procedures and systems become basic to how an organization operates

Accountability involves “carrots” and “sticks” for encouraging and reinforcing new behaviors and practices; it ultimately requires building responsibility for gender integration into job descriptions, work plans, and performance assessments.

Organizational Culture deals with the informal norms and embedded attitudes of an organization. To be successful, any gender mainstreaming strategy must take into account all four of these dimensions.

Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming

This framework enables an organization to systematically analyze and address the status of gender equality in all aspects of the operations and programs of the organization. It identifies areas of strength and achievement, innovative policies and practices, and continuing challenges as a foundation for gender action planning.

The Gender Assessment covers the organization itself and its programs. It includes three steps:

Step one: questionnaire (organizational self assessment)

Step two: focus groups (9 box framework)

Step three: action planning. In this step, an organization’s senior management team or a ‘gender task force’ analyzes the outcomes of the questionnaire and the focus groups. Using the 4-part

Gender Mainstreaming Framework, they develop a gender action plan, geared to the specific strengths, weaknesses, and circumstances of that particular organization/program.

Catalysts for successful gender mainstreaming:

- A participatory approach that builds strong organizational ownership
- An action plan based on where an organization is and wants to go, rather than imposing a particular direction
- Involvement of senior management

2. The Gender Equality Wheel

The **Gender Equality Wheel** is a tool which provides a framework to categorize the outcomes and impact of gender mainstreaming on the women, men, families, and communities for a diverse range of R&D projects.

It tracks women's transition from alienation and isolation to ultimate involvement in community activities and strategic participation in social, economic, cultural, and political transformation – and significantly, men's recognition, support, and involvement in this process. The Gender Equality Wheel identifies four stages of the progress towards gender equality:

The Four Stages

- **Engagement** of women to come out of isolation. It represents the stage at which people (especially women) come out of isolation, discover new possibilities for their lives, and begin to build mutual support.
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- **Enhancement** of lives in households and communities. This refers to the application of new ideas, knowledge and skills to enhance lives of family and community members and provide household and community gains
- **Emergence** into the public sphere. It moves women and men onto the public stage to social and political action that transforms their social, cultural, and political environment

Annex 2

Gender Mainstreaming & Organizational Self-Assessment Form

Project and Date _____

Your Position in the Organization/Project:

_____ Senior management/
Title _____

_____ Program Staff/
Title _____

_____ Administration
Title _____

_____ Support
Title _____

Instructions:

The following are statements about gender mainstreaming in organizations. For each statement, choose the response that most closely represents your own opinion about your organization/project. If you do not know, choose “no opinion”

1. The integration of gender equality in programs/projects is mandated in my organization
2. my organization has a written policy that affirms a commitment to gender equality
3. senior management actively support and take responsibility for the implementation of the policy (or for promoting gender equality if no policy exists)
4. there has been an increase in the representation of women in senior management positions in the past few years
5. my organization/project has budgeted adequate financial resources to support our gender integration work
6. there is a person or division responsible for gender in my organization/project
7. staff has the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude to carry out their work with gender awareness
8. program/project planning, implementation and evaluation teams in my organization consist of members who are gender-sensitive
9. program/project planning, implementation and evaluation teams in my organization (project) include at least one person with specific expertise and skills in gender issues
10. gender analysis is built into our program planning and implementation procedures
11. gender analysis is built into our program evaluation procedures

12. gender awareness is included in job description and/or in job performance criteria
13. data collected for projects and programs is disaggregated by sex
14. the gender impact of projects and programs is monitored and evaluated
15. my organization's programs/projects contribute to the empowerment of women/girls and the changing of unequal gender relations
16. gender issues are taken seriously and discussed openly by men and women in my organization
17. my organization has a reputation of integrity and competence on gender issues amongst leaders in the field of gender and development
18. the working environment in my organization has improved for women in the past two years
19. staff in my organization is committed to the advancement of gender equality
20. my organization has made significant progress in mainstreaming gender into our operations and programs

Strongly Agree / Agree / No Opinion / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

Annex 3

9 Box-Framework for Organizational Analysis in Focus Groups

ORGANISAT-IONAL DIMENSIONS	ORGANISATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS		
	MISSION/MANDATE	STRUCTURE	HUMAN RESOURCES
TECHNICAL DIMENSION	<p>POLICIES AND ACTIONS</p> <p>The guiding policy and its operationalisation in action plans, strategies/approaches, and monitoring and evaluation systems.</p>	<p>TASKS AND REPONSIBILITIES</p> <p>The way people are positioned and the way tasks and responsibilities are allocated and related to each other through procedures, information and co-ordinating systems.</p>	<p>EXPERTISE</p> <p>The number of staff and the requirements and conditions to allow them to work, such as job description, appraisal, facilities, training etc.</p>
POLITICAL DIMENSION	<p>POLICY INFLUENCE</p> <p>The way and extent management, people from within the organization and people from outside the organization influence policy and the running of the organization</p>	<p>DECISION MAKING</p> <p>The patterns of formal and informal decision making processes. The way diversity and conflicts are dealt with</p>	<p>ROOM FOR INNOVATION</p> <p>The space and incentives provided to staff to give shape to their work, such as rewards, career possibilities, variety in working styles</p>
CULTURAL DIMENSION	<p>NORMS/VALUES</p> <p>The symbols, rituals and traditions. The norms and values underlying the running of the organization and the behavior of the staff. The social and economic standards set</p>	<p>COOPERATION</p> <p>The way the work relations between staff and with outsiders are organized, such as working in teams, networking. The norms and values underlying these arrangements</p>	<p>ATTITUDE</p> <p>The way staff feels and thinks about their work, the working environment and about other (categories of) employees. The extent to which staff stereotype other staff. The extent to which staff identifies him/herself with the culture of the organization</p>

Annex 4

The elements of each of the 9 boxes and sample questions for Focus Group Discussion

The questions in these 9 boxes are meant to guide you to address the elements in each box. They are not meant to be a checklist, you can provide more information than is asked in the questions. Please do not answer with a 'yes' or 'no', but describe 'how' for each question.

1. Policies and activities

- policies
- action plans and operation strategies
- budget
- M&E systems
- Project proposals

Questions:

- Is there a policy for gender?
- Is there a policy for participation?
- Are these policies actively implemented in programs, projects, trainings?
- Is there sufficient budget allocated for these?
- Are indicators developed and used to measure the outcome of the activities related to gender and participatory approaches?

2. Tasks and Responsibilities

- structure
- levels
- terms of reference (TOR) /job description
- procedures
- information system

Questions

- have the level and position at which participatory issues are dealt with in the organization been clearly indicated?
- Are tasks and responsibilities related to participation clearly outlined within the organization?
- Does everyone in the organization know about the tasks and responsibilities of staff concerned with participation?
- Are information flows about participatory issues within the organization existing and operational?

3. Expertise

- numbers of staff with expertise on gender and participation
- qualification for gender and participation
- recruitment (selection process)
- appraisal/performance evaluation
- training opportunities
- orientation on gender and participation

Questions

- are existing staff adequately trained in gender and participatory approaches?
- Are there sufficient staff who can deal effectively with gender and participatory approaches?
- Are new staff selected on the basis of their experience in gender and participatory approaches?
- Are new staff members adequately familiarized with gender and participatory approaches of the organization?
- Are staff members adequately trained to keep up the expertise in the field of gender and participatory approaches?

4. Policy Influence

- people who influence the organization from inside
- people who influence the organization from outside (people and events), including rural women's groups
- the role of management

Questions

- are people who decide about policy formulation and implementation (eg board members, management) sensitive to gender issues and participation?
- Are opinions/requirements of external stakeholders (women farmers, male farmers, donors etc) taken seriously by management? If so, whose opinions are taken most seriously? And if so, how?

5. Decision-making

- Structures/channels for participation in discussion and decision-making
- Informal ways of decision-making through lobbying, personal relationships, etc.

Questions

- Are farmer's voices (at both the community & organizational levels) represented in the decision-making by management? If so, how?
- Do staff at all levels and rural community groups have access to information about the organization and its activities?
- Do rural communities have a role in decision-making?
- Is consensus of staff sought in decision-making or is it in the hands of a few people? If so, who?

6. Space to Innovate

- degree of freedom for staff to initiate new ideas/activities
- Rewards/incentives/ or discouragement for such behavior
- Freedom to use own style in conducting activities

Questions

- Does the space exist for those interested in gender?
- Does the space exist for those interested in participatory approaches
- Does working on gender and participatory approaches have status?
- Is it rewarded or discouraged?

7. Norms and Values

- Image
- Shared values
- Standards/norms
- Kinds of gender-friendly behavior that are promoted by the organization
- Openness to different styles
- Openness to criticisms and suggestions

Questions

- What are the values and norms in relation to gender and participation?
- To what extent do the organization's image, values and standards reflect those of the local political and cultural context?
- Is there an openness and appreciation to deal with gender and participatory issues/approaches? Is there an openness to communicating and working with rural women and rural women's groups? If so, how?
- Does using gender and participatory approaches fit into the image of the organization?
- Are gender and participatory approaches/ideologies reflected in the symbols of the organization?
- Is high quality work also associated with gender and participatory methodologies?

8. Cooperation and Learning

- Team work
- Communicating with and supporting each other
- Willingness to cope with and learn from change
- Communication and integration of new ideas
- Effectiveness of linkages with other organizations

Questions

- Do staff support each other in work and solving common problems and how?
- Is attention paid to team building and how?
- Are new ideas such as those of gender and participatory approaches communicated and integrated in the different sectors and how?
- Is there a willingness to cooperate with external organizations that are involved in gender and participatory approaches and how?

9. Attitude

- extent to which individual staff demonstrate gender –friendly behavior (through stereotypes, jokes, etc.)
- commitment/dedication/interest/motivation
- resistance to gender equality, participation of disadvantaged groups, particularly the participation of rural women

Questions

- Who demonstrates commitment to gender equality and participation of poor or disadvantaged stakeholders and how?
- Do some staff members accept responsibility to adopt gender and participatory approaches in their individual activities and how?
- Who are the staff members demonstrate positive attitudes towards change for gender equality and how?

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