

ASARECA Gender Mainstreaming Path

What is ASARECA?

The Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) is the coordinating agency for agricultural research and development in the eastern and central Africa region. ASARECA comprises of 10 countries (Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda) covering an area of 8.5 million km² with a total population of more than 280 million people, most of whom are rural dwellers pursuing agricultural livelihoods. About one third, 300 million hectares, of East and Central Africa's (ECA), total land area is devoted to agricultural uses making agriculture is the most common occupation and in the region. Agriculture looms large in national economies throughout the region and accounts for 43 percent of the overall regional GDP. The region has a diverse climatic conditions (precipitation range of less than 1 month to others with 12 months) and culture creating a challenge for technology transfer.

ASARECA's mission is to enhance regional collective action in agricultural research for development, extension and agricultural training and education to promote economic growth, fight poverty, eradicate hunger and enhance sustainable use of resources in Eastern and Central Africa. To serve its mission, ASARECA has seven and three units programmes; Staple Crops, Non-staple Priority Crops, Livestock and Fisheries, Agro-biodiversity and Biotechnology, Natural Resource Management and Forestry, Policy and Advocacy and Knowledge management and up-scaling programmes and M&E, Communications and Gender Units.

In 2005, ASARECA repositioned itself and developed a Strategic Plan that is congruent with the Millennium Development Goals and aspires to respond to the Africa vision of the AU/NEPAD of agricultural production annual growth rate of 6% by 2015. The major characteristics of the strategic plan are;

The Super Goal: Increased economic growth and improved social welfare in the ECA while enhancing the quality of the environment.

Goal: Enhanced sustainable productivity, value added and competitiveness of the regional agricultural system.

Purpose: Enhanced utilization of agricultural research and development innovations in eastern and central Africa

Result Areas:

1. Performance driven gender sensitive governance and management structures and systems established and operational.
2. Generation and uptake of demand driven agricultural technologies and innovations facilitated.
3. Policy options for enhancing the performance of the agricultural sector in the ECA sub-region facilitated.

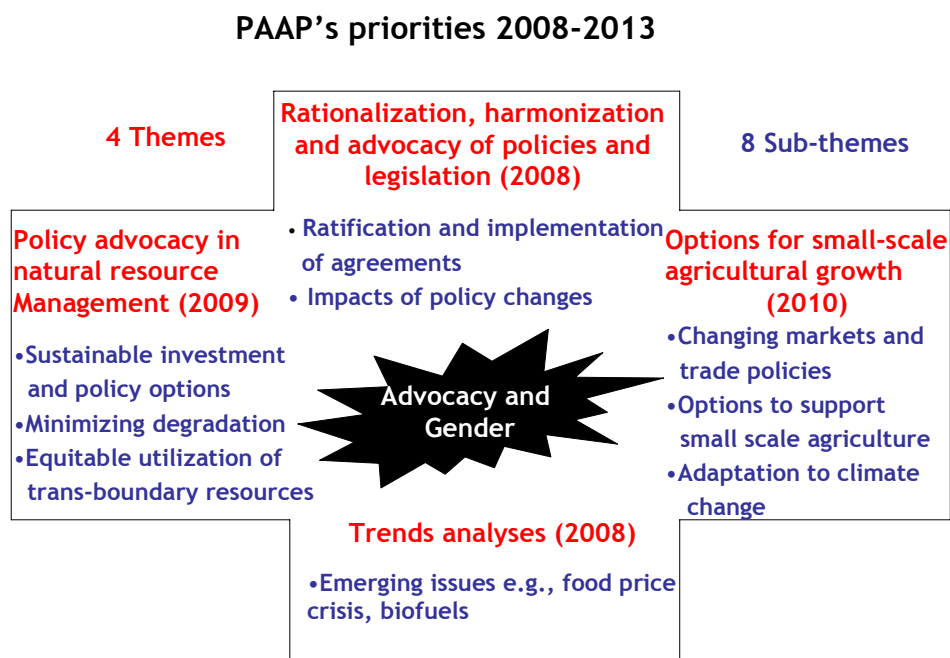
4. Capacity for implementing agricultural research for development in the ECA sub-region strengthened (including gender sensitive agricultural research).
5. Availability of information on agricultural innovation enhanced

Gender Mainstreaming in ASARECA

Gender mainstreaming office is placed in Policy Analysis and Advocacy Programme (PAAP). This was based on the appreciation that policy options for enhancing the performance of the agricultural sector in the sub-region should be gender sensitive. However, incorporating gender concerns routinely in the NARIs was hampered by lack of guiding policy frameworks. This went against the need to ensure that policy recommendations do not perpetuate gender inequalities but rather identify and address the needs and concerns of all beneficiary groups (such as poor rural women, men and youth). In recognition of this, ASARECA incorporated its log frame and has developed a gender mainstreaming strategy.

PAAP priorities for 2008- 2013 and the significant location of Advocacy and Gender at the centre to the priorities as shown in the diagram below;

Diagram 1: PAAP's priorities 2008 – 2013



In developing Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan, ASARECA conscientiously ensured that gender mainstreaming in taken into account. This realization was a result of findings from

previous efforts at Gender Mainstreaming at ASARECA. Initial efforts to mainstream gender at ASARECA were in 2001 with the “***Gender Factor in Agricultural Research Programs (2001-2004)***”) supported by the International Development Research Center (IDRC). The focus of this initiative was on development of approaches, tools and methodologies designed to incorporate gender disaggregated information into agricultural research problem, formulation, and decision-making and policy formulation process and use new tools and/or classical approaches to incorporate gender analysis concepts and tools, in ongoing and planned projects/programmes and on natural resource management (NRM) and commodity research. Disseminate research findings that show the positive and negative consequences using gendered approaches in NRM and commodity research was anticipated. This project was also intended to assist ASARECA member National Agricultural Research Organizations, Regional Agricultural Research Networks as well as its Committee of its Directors in the formulation of gender policy, where this did not exist, and in strengthening their institutional capacity for incorporation of the gender factor and utilization of gender disaggregated information in project/programme planning and implementation.

Based on the recommendations of this project, a follow-on project “***Building Capacity in Gender Analysis and Gender Mainstreaming in the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) of ASARECA (2004-2008)***”) was conceived and supported by the system-wide program in Participatory Research and Gender Analysis (PRGA). The project implementation focused on three major dimensions; capacity building, organizational change and case studies approach. As a result of participation in the project, considerable capacity was developed in the areas of: enhanced capacity to conduct gender analysis and participatory research, skills in mainstreaming gender analysis and participatory research through organizational change, skills to train others in the use of gender analysis and participatory research. This initiative involved participants from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

At the end of the two interventions, an institutional assessment of 8 NARIs was conducted. The assessment established that only 3 NARIs had gender-coordinating units and had gender was reflected in their strategic plans. None of the organizations, however, had a gender specific policy. It was also identified that the number of women in the institutes was lower than that of men with the gap widening up the hierarchy and gender analysis was mainly considered when specific development partners requested for it. The assessment also noted some best practices in gender mainstreaming such as;

- Incentives for scientist to do gender-sensitive work
- Appointing a gender coordinator and setting up a gender unit
- Case studies (documentation)
- Holding of annual or biannual seminars with a focus on gender
- Exchange visits/networking
- Continued training in gender Analysis skills

Lessons Learnt

The lessons learnt and recommendations from the project emphasized the need for a mechanism to be put in place that will allow ASARECA to:

- develop a regional policy that ensures gender-sensitive participation becomes integral to Agricultural Research in the NARS
- play a catalytic leadership role in ensuring that member NARS mainstream gender-sensitive participatory research by integrating such approaches in their research programs and projects
- support and enhance the capacity of NARS members in their ability to conduct and mainstream Participatory Research and Gender Analysis approaches
- provide a regional platform for exchange of experiences and 'best practices' in Participatory Research and Gender Analysis (PRGA) within members countries
- generate criteria for gender compliance in the ASARECA's concept notes and full proposals that are part of the competitive grants process
- develop performance indicators for programs that integrate PRGA approaches common to the NARS in the region so that they become accepted practice

The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy 2000-2013 marks the beginning of the systematic integration of gender into the programmes, policies and activities of ASARECA. This serious commitment was exhibited by the recruitment of the Gender Expert on the staff team to implement the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy. The Gender Mainstreaming goal is ***to ensure that ASARECA achieves gender responsiveness at all levels of institutional frameworks and all stages of design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of agriculture research agenda.*** The objectives of the strategy are;

- To explicitly state the organizational commitment towards Gender Equality.
- To provide a framework for developing relevant instruments to guide the process of gender mainstreaming.

The strategy has two thematic areas of;

Theme I: Developing Institutional Mechanisms for gender mainstreaming ASARECA.

Theme II: Integrating Gender in programmes/projects

A prioritization workshop of stakeholders has been conducted the priorities for the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy identified. (some pictures of the workshop is attached)