

# Repositioning

## Workshop Newsletter No. 1



June 16, 2010



### Welcome

CIAT and the PRGA Program would like to welcome all participants to the Workshop on Repositioning Gender-Responsive Participatory Research in Times of Change.

Over the next three days, we will be discussing the relevance and future of gender-responsive participatory research in the CGIAR.

This workshop is bringing together about 40 scientists with a wealth of experience in participatory and gender research. Participants represent a broad range of stakeholders from the CGIAR and its partners in the NARS, NGOs, academia and the donor community.

The main objective of the workshop is to identify practical ways to revitalize gender-responsive participatory research that meets the needs of women and men smallholder farmers. In addition, it will:

- Explore the relevance of gender-responsive participatory research, taking into account the results of the demand analysis conducted at the CGIAR system level and also including partner organizations.
- Design a strategy to support gender-responsive participatory research in the 'new' CGIAR, including the context of the Mega-Programs.

### Outline agenda

#### *Day 1 – today (Wednesday), June 16, 2010*

- Getting started
- Finding common ground
- Keynote
- Demand analysis
- Key issues in gender-responsive participatory research
- Workshop Cocktail, 7 p.m.

#### *Day 2 – Thursday, June 17, 2010*

- Key issues (cont.)
- Mega-Programs
- Strategic reflection
- Marketplace

#### *Day 3 – Friday, June 18, 2010*

- Open space (parallel sessions)
- Presentation and discussion of draft strategy
- Follow-up steps
- Evaluation
- Closing dinner (in Cali)



### Your host: The PRGA Program

The PRGA Program was established in 1997, as a CGIAR Systemwide program, to: identify, adopt, adapt and develop suitable participatory and gender-analysis methodologies for agricultural research; build capacity in the use and understanding of these methods in the CG and its partners; develop appropriate research partnerships and networks; and promote the institutionalization of gender-sensitive participatory research approaches.

The Program and its partners helped build strong momentum for the implementation of participatory approaches in agricultural research. In particular, it demonstrated that participatory research and gender analysis: embody rigorous methods that are scientifically grounded, confirming that the results produced are valid; produce broad impacts through technologies and resource-management options that are well suited to end-users' needs, thereby significantly reducing the likelihood of farmers rejecting the technologies developed; produce process impacts in the form of human and social capital, which help sustain rural development and innovation; are especially beneficial to women, the poorest and marginalized groups; and are cost-efficient.

Many of the lessons learned by the early 2000s are still applicable today—for example:

- While there is increasing interest in the use of participatory approaches, it seems that gender issues still constitute a largely ignored area in agricultural R&D;
- Many CG Centers have not achieved a critical mass in the use of equitable participatory research and gender analysis methods;
- There is a great and unmet need for capacity-development in the use of these methods;
- In cases where participatory approaches have been applied, there has been enhanced learning as a result of

experimentation with methods; however, much of this learning and change remains isolated from the project cycle and does not extend to the organization level.

These factors severely restrict the extent to which equitable participatory research and gender-analysis approaches are integrated into the research process, thereby limiting the extent to which their positive impacts can be scaled up.

Over the years, the PRGA Program amassed a large amount of information on participatory and gender research, providing state-of-the-art reviews and revealing the diversity of methods available in the pursuit of gender-sensitive and participatory research. For several years, the Program facilitated electronic communities of practice for participatory plant breeding (PPB), participatory natural-resources management (NRM) and gender. Having identified, adapted and developed various methodologies for participatory and gender research, the Program also provided capacity-building in their use to partners. Partnerships themselves became a key characteristic of the Program's work and research was often at the 'cutting edge' of the two subject areas.

Throughout the Program's life as a Systemwide entity, it provided leadership to the CG and its partners in impact assessment (particularly of participatory and gender research) and gender-mainstreaming. Meanwhile, its strong partnerships with leaders in the field helped to ensure the evolution of PPB as a flagship of participatory research world-wide.

As the CGIAR is being re-modeled to better address the needs of international agricultural research, the Systemwide program structure is being shelved in favor of Mega-Programs and other mechanisms of operation. The future of the PRGA Program's activities and legacy—gender-responsive participatory research—is under the microscope.