



GENDER JOURNEY MODULE

Evaluation pilot phase (2021-2023)

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This document provides information about the evaluation of the SD=HS gender tool “Gender Journey Module”. The pilot phase started in 2021 and ended in 2023.

Introduction

Sowing Diversity=Harvesting Security is a global program with the mission to support indigenous people and smallholder farmers for them to enjoy their Farmers’ Rights and to have the capacity to access, develop and use plant genetic resources to improve their food and nutrition security under conditions of climate change. A priority of the program is the meaningful participation of women.

To work on participatory plant breeding, seed production and marketing and nutrition, women and men come together in Farmer Field Schools (FFS). FFS should reflect the interests and needs of a larger group. But it can be difficult to formulate and achieve FFS objectives if there are wide inequalities between women and men in terms of decision making or participation. Women face challenges like household duties, cultural norms and often feel less self-confident because of a lack of formal education. On the other hand, women are responsible for the nutrition of their families and often prefer different crops than men. Also, the (traditional)

knowledge of women becomes more and more important in the face of climate change and food security.

The Gender Journey Module (GJM) was developed by Oxfam Novib and Oxfam in Laos for this specific context ([Gender Journey Module](#)). **Main objective of the GJM is to help facilitators and farmers to reflect on gender issues and promote women’s leadership and the equal participation of women and men in their FFS.** While the focus of the module is on improving FFS operations and results, it’s expected that gender discussions in FFS will have an impact on communities and households. The tool also aims to create space to discuss broader inequalities (e.g. access to resources). The GJM was inspired by GALS (Gender Action Learning System), an established gender transformative methodology. In contrast to GALS, the GJM requires less time commitment (which was requested by country teams) and can easily be linked to the regular SD=HS FFS curriculum.

Implementation

The Gender Journey Module is introduced at the beginning of the FFS cycle. The initial recommendation was to start implementing in the second year of a FFS, to make sure everyone is familiar with how a FFS works.

Facilitators play a key role in the implementation. They should be aware of gender imbalances, guide the group discussions and support FFS members in formulating and implementing **Gender Action Plans**. These plans are based on different participatory exercises (e.g. to discuss the roles of women and men in agriculture or the qualities that members want to see in a FFS).

The Gender Action Plans should include three action points, examples:

- By the end of the FFS season, most women will feel free to speak out and engage actively in FFS activities.
- This season, more men will join the FFS to make sure that the results will be taken up more by the community.
- This season we will have a group discussion about how men and women can have an equal say about the use of household land.

The facilitator must ensure that the group regularly reflects on the implementation of the Gender Action Plans (status, challenges, successes).

In total, **six of eight SD=HS countries** (Zimbabwe, Zambia, Uganda, Laos, Nepal and Peru) **took part in the pilot phase**, which started in 2021. Since it was a pilot, the implementation was not mandatory and only a limited number of FFS per country applied the module in the areas of participatory plant breeding, seed production and marketing and nutrition. Oxfam Novib organized Q&A sessions to clarify questions about the module and provide assistance in formulating Gender Action Plans.

Evaluation

The evaluation is based on different sources: To collect quantitative data, a Kobo questionnaire consisting of 43 questions was developed for the end of season evaluations¹ on FFS level. Qualitative data was collected via SD=HS linking and learning webinar “Gender Journey Module Evaluation” (Jan 2023), annual country reports, cross-country discussions and a shorter questionnaire for the national end of season evaluations. Not all country teams responded to the questionnaires². However, the combined input of Kobo data and qualitative feedback gives a solid picture to answer the main questions regarding the pilot phase:

- Did the Gender Journey Module help promote equal participation and leadership of women and men in their FFS?
- Were FFS participants able to formulate and implement Gender Action Plans and did they reach their targets?
- Did FFS participants notice an impact on the household and / or community level, in result of the Gender Journey Module?
- What were the challenges working with the tool?

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¹ End of season evaluations regularly take place in all SD=HS FFS

² Kobo data was collected from Peru, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Uganda, qualitative feedback from Uganda, Nepal and Zambia.

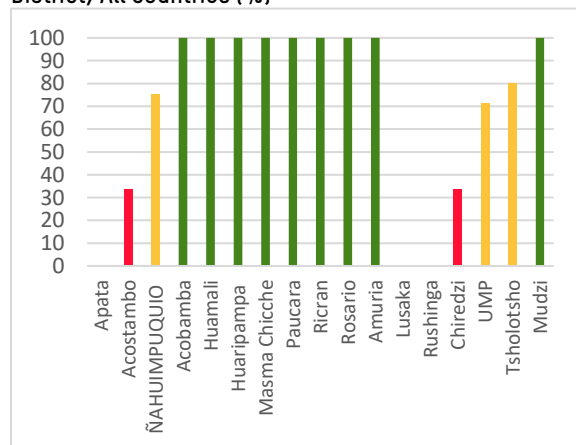
Results & Impact

“This seed program is solving more than just seed challenges but also gender issues.” Acan Asianut Winnifred, small-scale farmer in Ogolai subcounty, Amuria district, Uganda

According to KOBO data, 39 FFS from Peru, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe answered the end of season evaluation survey. Of these FFS, the Gender Journey Module (GJM) was implemented with **496 women** and **348 men**. Results from KOBO data paint a successful picture of the GJM.

Over 90% of FFS participants were satisfied with the content of the module and participated in all sessions. 94% of the FFS formulated Gender Action Plans, this is very positive. However, the actual implementation rate was lower (75%, see Chart 1).

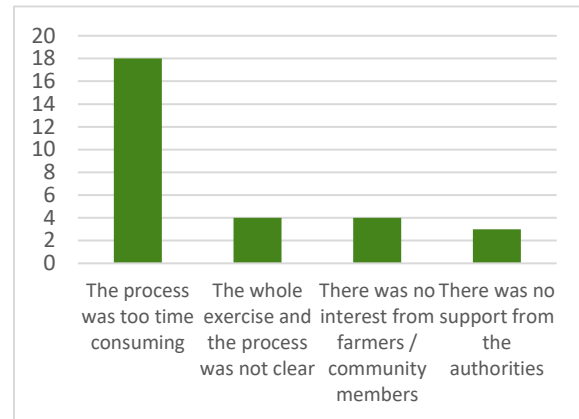
Chart 1. Implementation of Gender Action Plans by District, All Countries (%)¹



Of the FFS that did not implement GAP, 78% indicated the process was **too time consuming** (see **Chart 2**). On a positive note, in FFS where

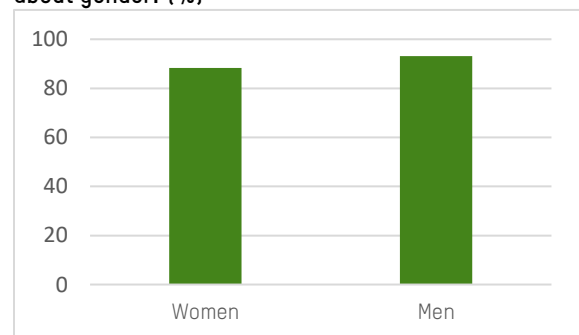
GAP were not implemented, participants were all satisfied with the content of the module, the materials shared with the participants, and the facilitator, so this was not an obstacle for implementation.

Chart 2. If the plans were not fully implemented, what were the reasons?²



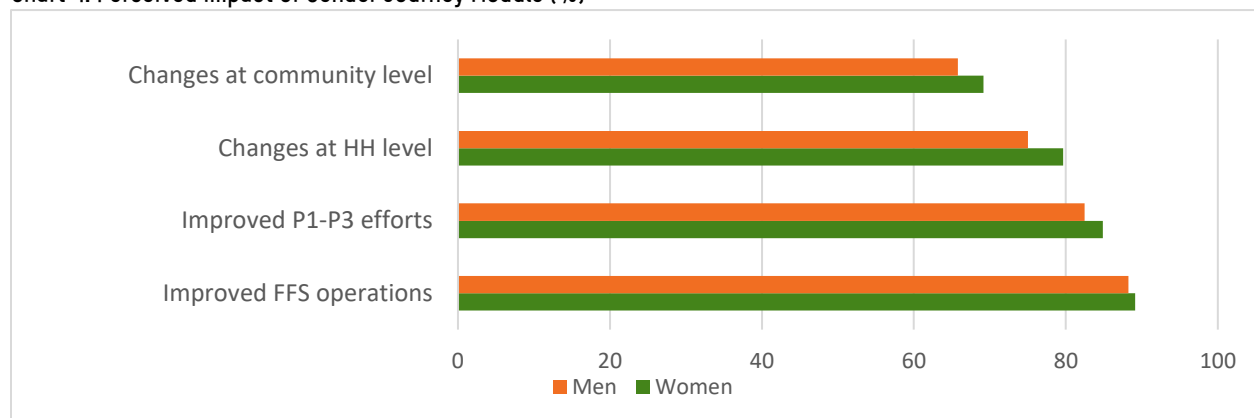
The GJM aims to introduce gender as an important topic to improve how a FFS operates but also to improve research objectives. This is often the first time that women and men have the opportunity and are given space to discuss gender related inequalities. After joining the gender discussions in their FFS, an overwhelming majority of participants feels they know more about gender (see Chart 3).

Chart 3. How many participants feel they know more about gender? (%)³



Charts ^{1 2 3} Data collected from KOBO end of season evaluation 2023, from Peru, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Chart 4. Perceived Impact of Gender Journey Module (%)⁴



*HH = household

Most importantly, **the module had a positive impact on FFS operations and improved the efforts on PPB, seed production and marketing and nutrition (Chart 4)**. Often the awareness of gender imbalances resulted in the successful implementation of Gender Action Plans. More women were able to join FFS activities because meeting times were adjusted to household duties. In Nepal, women felt encouraged to voice their input during FFS sessions and gained more confidence. In Zimbabwe and Uganda, the number of women in leadership positions increased. Setting targets helped to improve FFS operations and as a result, more members benefitted from the overall FFS objectives.

Grace Alebo joined the FFS in Amuria, Uganda. According to her, the Gender Journey Module has built confidence in the women farmers, helping them to speak their minds and feel comfortable to talk to and seek advice from the male farmers. Tasks are equally divided between genders and important matters are discussed with everyone present.

Link to video: [Gender Journey Model Stories from ESAFF Uganda.mp4 | Powered by Box](#)

In seed production and marketing it was reported that gender imbalances can increase (at the expense of women), once initiatives create income. The module is seen as a good instrument to analyze and change these dynamics.

Although the focus is on FFS, we even see improvements on community and household levels, like improved decision making between women and men (what to grow, what to eat). In Uganda, the GJM led to more equal participation of women and men and as a result, seed solutions in communities improved.

However, there is also feedback that the impact of the GJM was not always positive (see Chart 5).

Chart 5. Reasons for Impact Not Being Positive⁵



Charts ^{4 5} Data collected from KOB0 end of season evaluation 2023, from Peru, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

To achieve long-term impact, a few sessions on gender are not always sufficient. Also, some gender imbalances are systemic and deeply rooted, even the first step of addressing the topic can be a challenge. In Uganda, some men felt attacked by gender discussions and left FFS activities.

Although the implementation of the module doesn't require a lot of extra time, some FFS didn't meet the targets because they were too busy implementing the regular FFS curriculum.

Gender Journey Module as a Tool

The focus of the Gender Journey Module is on the FFS level and specifically in the case of Zambia this seemed to narrow. Gender discussions on FFS level can't be seen isolated from the community. Also, the FFS participants identified other gender-related topics they would like to discuss (land rights!) but there was no space for discussion and especially the aspect of land rights goes beyond FFS level.

Other country teams took the module as an opportunity to discuss community-wide gender issues. For instance, the team in Nepal organized a whole "Gender Week".

Following the instructions, the GJM should be introduced in the second FFS year, when participants are familiar with FFS operations and have most likely faced gender-related challenges. But there was strong feedback that the module should be introduced right at the beginning.

Overall, the satisfaction rate with the module itself was good, exercises were clear (although a lot of text). But the facilitator guide should include more illustrations and for the exercises, less writing and more drawing was recommended.

Conclusions & Recommendations

The Gender Journey Module was developed to introduce "gender" as a topic through the actual work on the ground, to improve FFS operations and results.

As requested by country teams, the process requires not a lot of extra time and is linked to the regular FFS curriculum.

The evaluation shows that the module helped improving FFS operations and more important, improving the results of the regular work on participatory plant breeding, seed production and marketing and nutrition. Gender-related discussions in FFS had an impact on household and community levels and women feel more confident to express their opinions and even take up leadership roles (e.g. as subgroup leaders or facilitators). However, the link to the community level needs to be strengthened. And there should be space to discuss topics that come up during FFS discussions (like land rights).

The evaluation also shows the importance of good facilitation. Facilitators need to be motivated and prepared to guide the group. We have also seen that countries have different approaches, from strictly following the module guidelines to a more creative interpretation by organizing extra sessions or events around gender.

The Gender Journey Module definitely meets the goals of improving FFS operations and results and even can influence households and communities. It is a good starting point for gender discussions, which otherwise wouldn't happen at all. It probably can't change deeply rooted gender inequalities within a few FFS sessions. The GALS methodology or the consultation of external gender

specialists could be a good addition here.

We recommend to roll out the (revised) Gender Journey Module in more Farmer Field Schools in a new program.

Recommendations to improve the tool:

- Stronger link between FFS discussions and community level required
- Introduction and start implementation GJM at the beginning of the FFS season
- Highlight importance of including Gender Action Plans in the regular FFS curriculum
- (External) Gender experts can support discussions on deeply rooted gender inequalities and special topics (like land rights)
- Guide: More illustrations, less text
- Participatory exercises: more drawings

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More information

SD=HS Gender Journey Module: [Gender Journey Module - SD=HS | SD=HS \(sdhsprogram.org\)](#)

Role of women in biodiversity management: [Women's roles in biodiversity management - SD=HS | SD=HS \(sdhsprogram.org\)](#)

Nepal: [Gender Journey Workshops in Nepal - SD=HS | SD=HS \(sdhsprogram.org\)](#)

Zambia: [Understanding the gender context of communities through the Gender Journey Module - SD=HS | SD=HS \(sdhsprogram.org\)](#)

Nepal: [Incubating Leadership through Farmer's Field School - SD=HS | SD=HS \(sdhsprogram.org\)](#)